

### Pappa al Pomodoro Soup

This recipe comes from a wonderful chef by the name of Liria Costantino. I met her while staying at her place, Casali di Monticchio, in the Italian region of Umbria.

You will need a food mill to prepare this soup. I found mine at Canadian Tire but they can also be found at most kitchenware stores or online at Amazon.ca.

Serves 4

2 pounds plum tomatoes (about 8-10 tomatoes), washed and cut into quarters  
OR two 400-gram cans Italian plum tomatoes, drained and juices discarded  
4 large green onions, washed and cut in half  
10 fresh basil leaves  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
pinch red pepper flakes (optional)

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil  
3 whole cloves garlic, lightly smashed  
4 whole cloves  
10 fresh basil leaves

1/2 loaf stale Italian bread (at least 3 days old)

Extra virgin olive oil (a drizzle for each bowl of soup to garnish)  
10 fresh basil leaves, thinly sliced, for garnish

1. Place quartered fresh tomatoes (or whole canned tomatoes), green onions, basil, salt and red pepper flakes. Cook on medium heat for about 20 minutes.
2. Set up a food mill over a large stainless steel mixing bowl. Remove green onions from the pot and discard. Place half the cooked tomatoes into the food mill and turn the handle of the food mill. The pulp and juice of the tomatoes will fall below, into the bowl and the skins and seeds will stay up top in the food mill. Dump out the skins and seeds from the top part of the food mill. Repeat with the rest of the tomatoes. Set aside the juice and pulp.
3. In the same large saucepan, heat olive oil on a gentle heat for a minute or so. Add whole garlic cloves, whole cloves and basil leaves. Cook for a few minutes until it all smells incredibly fragrant. DO NOT BROWN GARLIC!
4. Add tomato pulp and simmer for about 10 minutes.

5. While tomatoes are simmering, cut up stale bread into 1-inch chunks. Place half of them into food processor and process until you have breadcrumbs. Repeat with rest of bread cubes.
6. Remove garlic cloves and whole cloves from the pot. Add half the breadcrumbs and stir. Look at the consistency of the soup. It should be quite thick and porridge like. The first time I had this soup, it was served to me with a fork! Add the remaining bread crumbs if desired. (I used the entire amount called for). Let simmer for a few more minutes. Soup can be made several hours ahead and will keep at room temperature. Reheat before serving.
7. Ladle into bowls. Drizzle each bowl with some extra virgin olive oil and some thinly sliced basil.