

Salt and Serenity

Classic Andalusian Gazpacho

This recipe comes from the July 2002 issue of Gourmet magazine. If you are making this before local tomatoes are at their peak, you are better off using canned Italian plum tomatoes.

The original recipe calls for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil. I have made this with as little as 2 tablespoons of olive oil, and I still found it to be delicious, although I loved it best with about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil.

1 (2-inch-long) piece baguette, crust discarded
2 garlic cloves
2 teaspoons Kosher salt
2 tablespoons Sherry vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb ripe tomatoes, cored and quartered
 $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup mild extra-virgin olive oil (preferably Spanish)

6 inch piece of baguette, diced into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes
2-3 tablespoons olive oil
Kosher salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ red pepper, diced into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes
 $\frac{1}{2}$ green pepper, diced into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes
 $\frac{1}{4}$ English cucumber, diced into $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes

1. Soak bread in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup water 1 minute, and then squeeze dry, discarding soaking water.
2. Using a microplane zester, grate garlic. Blend grated garlic, salt, bread, sherry vinegar, sugar, cumin, and half of tomatoes in a food processor or blender until tomatoes are very finely chopped. Add remaining tomatoes and, when very finely chopped, gradually add oil in a slow stream, blending until as smooth as possible, about 1 minute.
3. Force soup through a sieve or food mill into a bowl, pressing firmly on solids. Discard solids.

4. Transfer to a glass container and chill, covered, until cold, about 3 hours (or up to 2 days).
5. While soup is chilling, preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Mix cubed bread and olive oil and spread out on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with kosher salt. Bake for about 8 minutes until croutons are browned.
6. Ladle chilled soup into bowls and garnish with diced red and green peppers, cucumber and croutons.