

# Salt and Serenity

## Roasted Tomato and Carrot Soup with Cheddar Crisps

Serves 6

### Soup

2 pounds ripe plum tomatoes (about 8 tomatoes), halved  
1 pound carrots, (about 4 large ones), peeled and cut into 3 inch chunks  
½ purple or yellow onion, cut into wedges  
4 cloves garlic, peeled and left whole  
¾ teaspoon kosher salt  
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional)  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 large sprig rosemary  
2 large sprigs thyme  
3 cups water  
1/3 cup 35% cream (optional)  
10 fresh basil leaves, rolled and sliced into julienne strips

Preheat oven to 425°F. In a large bowl, mix tomatoes, carrots, onion, garlic, salt, pepper, red pepper flakes, olive oil, thyme and rosemary sprigs. Toss until everything is coated well with the olive oil. Spread out on a parchment lined baking sheet and roast in hot oven for 45 minutes.

Remove vegetables from oven, discard thyme and rosemary sprigs and scrape all the vegetables into a blender. Add 1 cup of water and puree until smooth. Transfer soup into a large pot and add up to an additional 2 cups of water until you get the consistency you like. Soup can be made 2 days ahead up to this point. Cover and refrigerate if you make it ahead of time.

Reheat soup and stir in cream if desired. Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with basil. Serve with Cheddar crisps on the side.

### Cheddar Crisps

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grate white cheddar on the large holes of a box grater. In a small bowl, mix cheese with thyme, cayenne and black pepper. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. This is essential, or else you will be scraping broken cheese

crisps off the baking sheet. Using a tablespoon measure, scoop 2 level tablespoons of grated cheese onto the baking sheet.

Using your fingers, spread the cheese out into a single layer, about a 4 inch diameter circle. You want flat circles, not mounded heaps. They will spread out as they bake, but they need to be wispy to begin with, or else they'll be gooey in the middle and burnt around the edges. Try to form a single layer of shreds with some gaps between the shreds of cheese.

Repeat with the remaining cheese, leaving 2 inches between circles. You will get 6 circles. If you have smaller baking sheets (smaller than 13 x 18 inches), do not try to get all 6 on one baking sheet. Bake until the cheese is golden brown and lacy, 13-15 minutes. Remove from oven and blot any excess oil off the surface of the crisps with a paper towel. They will still be a bit soft when you remove them from the oven. They will harden upon cooling. Crisps will keep for up to 2 days in an airtight container at room temperature.