

Salt and Serenity

Grilled Gazpacho Soup with Cheese Crisps

I have served this soup both chilled and heated and both are delicious. Take the extra few minutes to make the accompanying cheese crisps. It's so satisfying to crumble them into the soup.

Serves 4-6

1 kilogram plum tomatoes (about 12)
1 large red pepper
1 jalapeno pepper
1 sweet onion, peeled and cut into 1-inch thick slices
1 ear corn, in husk
50 grams baguette (about 1/8 of a baguette), soaked in water for 30 seconds, then squeezed dry
1 tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
3 tablespoons good quality extra-virgin olive oil

Garnishes:

1/4 English cucumber, diced into 1/4 inch pieces
1/2 red pepper, diced into 1/4 inch pieces
Parmesan crisps (recipe below)

1. Preheat BBQ to medium heat. Place plum tomatoes, red pepper, jalapeno pepper, onion slices and corn, in husk, on grill. Cook the plum tomatoes until they are lightly charred, and skins begin to tear, about 3 -4 minutes per side. Remove from grill. The jalapeno and red pepper should be grilled until they are quite black. This will take about 8-10 minutes. Keep turning peppers so that all sides are blackened. The onion slices should get lightly charred. This will take about 8 minutes. The corn will also need to be cooked for about 10 minutes, until the husk is nicely browned.
2. Peel charred skins off red pepper and jalapeno. Discard skin and scrape out seeds from the inside of the peppers. If you prefer a mild heat, only use 1/2 the jalapeno.
3. Peel husk and silk off the corn. Cut corn off the cob and set aside. It will be used as a garnish on top of the soup.
4. You will need to blend this in two batches. Place the red pepper, the jalapeno, onion slices, half the tomatoes, baguette, vinegar, cumin and salt. Blend on high speed until pureed.
5. Transfer pureed mixture to a mesh sieve, set over a big mixing bowl. Strain soup. Add the second half of tomatoes to blender and puree. Once they are smooth, slowly stream in olive oil. Transfer mixture to mesh sieve and strain this second batch. Mix everything well and taste. Adjust seasoning if needed. Chill soup for at least an hour. Or, if you prefer, the soup can be heated.
6. Pour soup into bowls and serve with the garnishes on the side, letting everyone assemble their own bowl.

Parmesan Crisps

Makes 18 crisps

113 grams Parmesan cheese (not grated)

Preheat oven to 350°F.

1. Using the large holes of a box grater, grate half the Parmesan cheese. Grate the other half on the smallest holes of the box grater. Mix the two piles of cheese together in a small bowl.
2. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Using a Tablespoon measure, spoon cheese onto baking sheets. Mounds should be at least 2 inches apart. Using your fingers, gently pat/spread the cheese out into a 2-inch circle.
3. Bake for 7-9 minutes, until crisp and golden brown. Let cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes and then carefully transfer to a wire cooling rack with a metal spatula to cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature.