

Bruised Tomato and Bread Soup

serves 4

This is a perfect recipe to make when you have bought too many tomatoes at the market and they are starting to show their age.

Ingredients

Handful of fresh basil

1 head of garlic, peeled

2 ounces Parmesan cheese with rind (or ½ cup+ pre-grated Parmesan)

3 cups water

3 slices thick day-old or stale country-style bread with crusts, torn into 1-inch pieces (about 4 cups)

⅓ cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling

salt, freshly ground pepper

3 pounds ripe tomatoes (any variety except cherry tomatoes will work), cored, cut into large pieces (or 1 large tin of tomatoes)

Preparation

Step 1

Pluck basil leaves from stems. Place stems and any larger or not-so-beautiful leaves in a large saucepan along with 2 or 3 larger garlic cloves; cover with 3 cups water. Set aside remaining smaller, prettier basil leaves. Cut Parmesan away from rind and add rind to pan; set cheese aside. Bring liquid to a bare simmer over medium heat, then reduce heat so mixture is steaming. Let ingredients steep while you start the soup.

Step 2

Preheat oven to 375° (if you have a toaster oven, use it). Spread out 1 cup bread on a small rimmed baking sheet, drizzle lightly with oil, season with salt and pepper, and toss to coat. Toast until edges are crisp but centers are still chewy, 8–10 minutes; set croutons aside. *Alternatively, you can skip this step and serve soup with crackers or pita chips.*

Step 3

Meanwhile, slice remaining garlic cloves. Heat ⅓ cup oil in a medium pot over medium and cook garlic, stirring occasionally, until evenly golden brown and softened, about 2 minutes. Season generously with salt and pepper.

Add tomatoes to pot and cook, stirring energetically with a wooden spoon now and then, until tomato juices are bubbling, 6–8 minutes. Taste and season with more salt and pepper, then add remaining 3 cups bread. Stir to coat, then strain basil stock into tomato mixture and bring to a simmer. Cook, whisking occasionally, until bread disintegrates into a porridgelike texture and soup is velvety and thick, 10–12 minutes. (The whisk helps break the bread into smaller pieces; if you like your soup rustic, stick with the spoon. If you want it to be very smooth, use an immersion blender.)

Step 4

Finely grate reserved Parmesan and whisk half into soup along with reserved basil. Cook, stirring, until soup is thickened and looks shiny, about 2 minutes. Taste and season with more salt and pepper as needed.

Step 5

Divide soup among bowls and top with reserved croutons, remaining Parmesan, and a drizzle of oil. **Enjoy!**



Adapted from Bon Appetit recipe

