



Slow Cooker Tomato Basil Soup

Recipe Source: www.melskitchencafe.com

Serves 6-8

Ingredients:

- 2 (14.5 oz) cans reduced-sodium petite diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 cup finely diced celery
- 1 cup finely diced carrots
- 1 cup finely diced onions
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 Tbsp dried basil
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup flour
- 1 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 cups fat free half and half, lightly warmed
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper, or to taste

Steps:

- In a 5-quart slow cooker, combine the tomatoes, celery, carrots, onions, oregano, basil, broth, and bay leaf. Cover and cook on low 5-7 hours until the vegetable become tender.
- About 45 minutes before serving, heat the oil over low heat in a medium saucepan. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until the mixture is golden, about 3 minutes. The mixture will be crumbly but that's okay.
- Whisking constantly, slowly ladle in 1 cup (or a ladleful) of the hot soup from the slow cooker. Whisk until smooth and bubbly. Add another cup of soup and stir again until smooth. Add 1-2 cups more and stir until smooth.
- Stir the creamy, hot mixture back into the slow cooker. Add the cheese, half and half, and salt and pepper and stir to combine.
- Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes until ready to serve. (At this point, you can blend for smoother texture, if desired.)

Tips from the Test Kitchen: This recipe also works on the stovetop if you reverse the steps a bit. Start by heating the oil and adding the celery, onions, and carrots for a quick sauté, then add the flour and stir for 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes, broth, oregano, basil, and bay leaf. Simmer until the vegetables are tender. About 30 minutes before serving, add the cheese and half and half, along with the salt and pepper. Heat through but do not boil. You can blend at this point if desired.



Nutritional Facts (per serving): Calories: 260, Carbohydrates: 21 grams, Protein: 8 grams, Total Fat: 17 grams, Saturated Fat: 7 grams, Cholesterol: 34 mg, Sodium: 976 mg, Fiber: 3 grams, Total Sugars: 8 grams.