



Gazpacho

SERVES 6

I'll never forget sitting in the exquisite courtyard of the Alfonso Hotel in Seville, Spain. I was surrounded by tall arched windows flanked with hand painted tiles. The hot sun was beaming into the room, and I ordered a refreshing bowl of gazpacho. The server told me that her mother makes it at home to cure any sickness, sadness, or hangover. Fortunately, I didn't have any of those symptoms, but it tasted so good, it put me in an even better mood than when I had sat down. I learned later that gazpacho was originally a soup made from bread, olive oil, and water. When the Spaniards returned from the New World with tomatoes and peppers, they began adding them to the soup. Some people blend all the ingredients for a smooth soup, and some blend only half. But, most importantly, the tomatoes should be sweet and ripe.

INGREDIENTS

Gazpacho:

2 pounds ripe tomatoes
2 slices of day-old bread, crusts removed
2 cucumbers, peeled, seeded, and chopped
2 small yellow onions, chopped
2 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper
6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1/4 cup tomato juice
1 cup of homemade croutons

Croutons:

3 slices sourdough bread, crust removed
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 clove garlic, finely minced
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

PROCESS:

Gazpacho:

Fill a 2 quart saucepan halfway with water and bring to a boil. Using a sharp knife, cut a shallow X on the bottom of each tomato. Plunge half the tomatoes into the boiling water and cook for one minute. Remove tomatoes with a slotted spoon and repeat with remaining tomatoes. Remove the skins, pulling from the cut areas. Slice tomatoes in half and remove seeds with a spoon. Chop into 1/2" cubes. Set aside 2 cups of chopped tomatoes. Put the remaining tomatoes into a food processor or blender. Meanwhile, soak the bread in a bowl of water for 1 minute, then squeeze dry with your hands. Add to the tomatoes in



blender. Set aside 1 cup of a mixture of chopped onion, red bell pepper, and green bell pepper for garnish. Place the remaining into blender with tomatoes and bread. Add cumin, salt, pepper, olive oil, vinegar, and tomato juice. Blend until smooth and pour into a large bowl. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour. Serve with croutons and reserved garnishes (recipe follows).

Croutons:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cut bread into 1/2" cubes and put on a baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and top with garlic and salt. Bake for 15-20 minutes, until toasted.