



Gazpacho

This recipe originates with my mother-in-law, Carmen Perujo, and is a classic example of this Sevillano dish. Tomatoes with very thin skins tend to separate from the pulp during processing. If this happens, you'll probably want to process the gazpacho until it's perfectly smooth and then strain it through a fine sieve to remove the fibrous skins. Tomatoes with thicker skins can survive the food processor a little better and don't need straining; they can be left more coarsely pureed.

Serves four. Yields four cups.

- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 large green bell pepper, seeded and coarsely chopped
- 1 1/2 lb. very red, ripe tomatoes, cut into large pieces
- 3-inch-long piece of baguette, sliced and dried overnight or until hard
- 1/2 cup good-quality extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 Tbs. sherry vinegar or red-wine vinegar; more to taste
- 2 tsp. kosher or coarse salt; more to taste
- 1 cup peeled, diced cucumber
- 1 cup diced onion, for garnish (optional)

Put the garlic, green pepper, tomatoes, bread, olive oil, vinegar, and salt in a food processor. Pulse until the ingredients begin to puree; continue processing until the mixture is as fine a puree as you want.

If you're straining the soup, pass it through a large fine sieve set over a large bowl, pressing until only solids remain in the sieve; discard the solids. If you're not straining, pour the soup directly into a bowl.

Stir in 1/4 to 1/2 cup water, or enough to give the soup the consistency of a thin milkshake. If you want a thicker soup, add less water, or none at all. Add more salt or vinegar to taste. Cover and refrigerate until well chilled, at least 1 hour.

Ladle the gazpacho into chilled bowls or cups. Pass bowls of diced cucumber and onion, if using, so people can garnish their own.

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