

Best Gazpacho

By Julia Moskin

YIELD 8 to 12 servings, about 1 quart

TIME 20 minutes plus chilling time

More of a drink than a soup, served in frosted glasses or chilled tumblers, gazpacho is perfect when it is too hot to eat but you need cold, salt and lunch all at the same time. Gazpacho is everywhere in Seville, Spain, where this recipe comes from, but it's not the watered-down salsa or grainy vegetable purée often served in the United States. This version has no bread and is a creamy orange-pink rather than a lipstick red. That is because a large quantity of olive oil is required for making delicious gazpacho, rather than take-it-or-leave-it gazpacho. The emulsion of red tomato juice, palest green cucumber juice and golden olive oil produces the right color and a smooth, almost fluffy texture.

INGREDIENTS

About 2 pounds ripe red tomatoes, cored and roughly cut into chunks

1 Italian frying (cubanelle) pepper or another long, light green pepper, such as Anaheim, cored, seeded and roughly cut into chunks

1 cucumber, about 8 inches long, peeled and roughly cut into chunks

1 small mild onion (white or red), peeled and roughly cut into chunks

1 clove garlic

2 teaspoons sherry vinegar, more to taste

Salt

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, more to taste, plus more for drizzling

PREPARATION

Step 1

Combine tomatoes, pepper, cucumber, onion and garlic in a blender or, if using a hand blender, in a deep bowl. (If necessary, work in batches.) Blend at high speed until very smooth, at least 2 minutes, pausing occasionally to scrape down the sides with a rubber spatula.

Step 2

With the motor running, add the vinegar and 2 teaspoons salt. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil. The mixture will turn bright orange or dark pink and become smooth and emulsified, like a salad dressing. If it still seems watery, drizzle in more olive oil until texture is creamy.

Step 3

Strain the mixture through a strainer or a food mill, pushing all the liquid through with a spatula or the back of a ladle. Discard the solids. Transfer to a large pitcher (preferably glass) and chill until very cold, at least 6 hours or overnight.

Step 4

Before serving, adjust the seasonings with salt and vinegar. If soup is very thick, stir in a few tablespoons ice water. Serve in glasses, over ice if desired, or in a bowl. A few drops of olive oil on top are a nice touch.

PRIVATE NOTES

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