

Cream of Tomato Soup with Seafood

For the stewed tomatoes:

- 4 cups peeled and seeded ripe tomatoes (any kind), in large chunks or halves (see NOTE)
- 1/2 medium onion, minced
- 2 ribs celery with leaves, chopped
- 1/4 teaspoon celery seed
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 6 chopped basil leaves

For the soup:

- 1 ear corn
- 5 cups stewed tomatoes (see above)
- 4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
- Scant 1/2 cup flour
- 4 cups light cream or half-and-half
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 to 2 cups raw or cooked seafood, such as crabmeat, lobster chunks or jumbo shrimp (peeled, de-veined and cut in chunks)
- Basil leaves, cut in strips, for garnish

Directions: For the stewed tomatoes: Combine the tomatoes, onion, celery, celery seed, bay leaf, cloves, salt, pepper and basil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Cook uncovered for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat to medium-low.

Discard the cloves and bay leaf. The yield will be about 5 cups.

For the soup: Strip the kernels from the ear of corn and reserve.

Cut the cob in chunks; submerge them in the stewed tomatoes. Cook (over medium-low heat) for 10 minutes, stirring almost constantly. Discard the cob pieces.

Use an immersion (stick) blender to puree the stewed tomatoes, or puree in batches in a blender (making sure to remove the center knob in the lid so steam can escape; place a dish towel over the opening).

Melt the butter in a soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Whisk in the flour until well incorporated, to form a roux; cook for a few minutes, whisking, until the roux begins to darken slightly.

Slowly whisk in the cream or half-and-half to form a smooth, thick soup base.

Add the pureed tomatoes and Parmesan cheese; stir until well blended.

Add the reserved corn kernels and seafood to taste; cook (over medium heat), stirring almost constantly until the seafood is heated or cooked through, depending on which seafood you chose.

Divide among individual bowls; serve immediately, garnished with the basil.

Note: To peel tomatoes, use a sharp knife to score a shallow "X" on the bottom of each one. Place in very hot or boiling water for 1 to 2 minutes, then drain. When cool enough to handle, discard the loosened skins.

Serves 8.

Nutrition information: 320 calories, 8 grams protein, 15 grams carbohydrates, 26 grams fat, 100 milligrams cholesterol, 590 milligrams sodium, 2 grams fiber, 3 grams sugar

Serves 8.

Tip: The stewed tomatoes make a nice, simple accompaniment to grilled chicken and corn on the cob. They can be frozen for up to 1 year. The soup is best assembled on the same day it will be served.

Read more: [The thrill of the tomato - Boulder Daily Camera](http://www.dailycamera.com/food/ci_15770496#ixzz0xBZKLyRK)
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