

Gazpacho

Drink your salad. Hailing from the Spanish region of Andalusia, gazpacho originally was made from garlic, olive oil, almonds and stale bread. But over time and geographical shifts, it morphed into the tomato-based summer vegetable soup we can't get enough of when the garden is bursting and the nights are warm. For the best flavor, let it chill for several hours or up to a day or two. If you're impatient and must serve it immediately, throw a couple of ice cubes into the blender along with the gazpacho. It's sort of cheating, but when it's hot outside, you do what you have to do. A little toasted garlic-rubbed crusty bread turns this into a light meal.

See our Cook's Note to learn how to load your blender to increase efficiency.

Ingredients

2 pounds ripe tomatoes, cored and chopped
1 cucumber, peeled, seeded and chopped
1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded and chopped
1 jalapeño, cored, seeded and chopped (optional)
2 cloves garlic
1/2 small red onion, chopped
2 tablespoons sherry vinegar
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus additional for drizzling
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

special equipment

blender

Directions

Working in batches, puree the tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, garlic and onion in a blender until smooth. Pour into a large bowl and whisk in the vinegar and then the oil until the soup emulsifies and thickens. Season with 2 teaspoons salt and a few grinds of pepper.

(If you like a smoother gazpacho, strain the soup through a fine mesh sieve, pushing down on the solids with the back of a ladle or spatula, before adding the vinegar, oil, salt and pepper. Discard solids.)

Cover and refrigerate the soup until well chilled, at least 3 hours. Thin with water if you like it looser. Adjust seasonings and give it a good stir to bring it together again. Pour in soup bowls or over ice in a tall glass. Serve with a drizzle of oil if you'd like.

Cook's Note

It's really annoying to pack a blender full of goodies to puree and the motor is whirring away but nothing's happening. To avoid this, blend a handful of pieces of juicy ingredients to get some liquid going, then add more of the ingredients. If working in batches, leave a little of the liquid from the last batch in the blender and add more ingredients to it.

total time: 20 minutes plus chilling time (minimum of 3 hours)

active prep: 20 minutes

serves: 4

difficulty: *easy*