



Homemade Tomato Soup & Grilled Cheese Croutons

Ingredients:

For "Croutons":

6 slices whole wheat bread

butter

12 slices cheddar or American cheese

For Creamy Tomato Soup:

2 tbsp olive oil

1/2 onion, finely diced (I used some red, and some white because that is all I had on hand)

1 carrot, washed, skin on and finely diced

1 tbsp garlic (1 clove), finely minced

1 tsp each; salt, black pepper, parsley

1/2 tsp each; thyme and rosemary

1/4 tsp crushed red pepper flakes

2 tbsp red wine vinegar

1 can tomato puree

1/4 cup water

2 cups chicken or vegetable stock (preferably homemade)

1/4 cup cream – heavy cream, preferably

Directions:

In a large pot over medium–high heat, add olive oil and heat until shimmering. Add onion and carrot. Stir to coat the veggies in oil. Season with spices. Cook, stirring frequently, until the veggies start to soften – about 10 minutes. Add garlic, and cook another 30 seconds.

Right away, add red wine vinegar and stir, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Reduce heat to medium–low, and add tomato puree and chicken (or veggie) stock. After pouring tomato puree into the pot, add 1/4 cup of water to the can, and swirl it around, and then add that water to the pot.

Simmer on medium–low heat for 20–25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Pour soup into a blender and puree on high for 2–3 minutes, or until smooth. Be VERY CAREFUL. Hot liquids in a blender can be dangerous, so be sure to hold a towel over the top or allow the soup to cool before pureeing.

Return pureed soup to pot, and turn heat on low. Add cream and slowly stir to combine. Heat until just simmering, then turn off the heat.

Serve with grilled cheese croutons, or just plain ol' grilled cheese. To make grilled cheese croutons, start by making a regular grilled cheese. Place two pieces of American cheese in between two pieces of whole wheat bread. Butter the outsides and cook in a nonstick skillet over medium heat, until crispy on each side. Remove from heat and let cool at least 5 minutes. Cut grilled cheese into bite-sized pieces, or “croutons”, and serve floating over the top of this delicious, creamy tomato soup.