



Tomato Gazpacho



Gazpacho is an ancient Spanish bread soup, possibly dating back to Roman times, which was readily adapted to include the New World tomato in the 18th century. It makes a delicious, appetite-stimulating start to a summer meal and is great in shot glasses for cocktail parties - perfect with an ice-cold Manzanilla Sherry such as Barbadillo Solear. If you don't have time for all the peeling, seeding and dicing, throw all of the vegetables into the blender and just use the fried bread for garnish – it'll still look good and taste great! If you don't have Sherry vinegar use a mild red wine vinegar, but start with half the quantity and add extra to taste as it may be stronger.

Serves 8 as a starter

INGREDIENTS

- 1 clove garlic
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 6 slices white sourdough bread
- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for pan-frying
- 1kg ripe red tomatoes
- 2 red capsicums
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers
- 2 red onions
- ¼ cup Sherry vinegar
- 1 cup water, more or less

METHOD

1. Peel garlic, slice in half, discard the centre 'germ' and chop roughly. Place in a blender with ½ teaspoon salt and 4 slices of the bread and process until crumbed. With motor running, slowly add the oil until fully incorporated. Remove from blender and set aside.
2. Quarter all except 1 tomato. Peel and seed the reserved tomato, dice finely and set aside.
3. Halve capsicums and remove seeds and membrane. Peel and dice half a capsicum finely and set aside.
4. Peel and halve cucumbers. Seed half a cucumber, dice finely and set aside.
5. Peel and halve onions. Dice one half finely and set aside.
6. Reserving the finely diced portions for garnish, place remaining tomato, capsicum, cucumber and onion in the blender and process until smooth; you may need to work in 2 batches, depending on the size of your blender.
7. Add bread paste and process again. Add vinegar and process briefly to combine. Refrigerate until well chilled, preferably overnight.
8. Meanwhile, discard crusts from remaining bread and cut into small cubes. Heat a frying pan, add a drizzle of oil and fry bread until golden and crisp. Tip onto a plate to cool then store in an airtight container until needed.
9. Blitz soup one more time in blender, then pass through a fine strainer, pressing down with the back of a ladle to extract as much liquid as possible. Discard solids.
10. Stir water into the soup, adding more or less depending on the consistency you prefer. Taste and add extra vinegar or salt if needed. Return to the refrigerator until well chilled.
11. Serve topped with a scattering of diced vegetables and toasted bread cubes.