

Gazpacho

Ingredients:

4 ounces day old bread, crusts removed, cut into 2 1/2-inch cubes
2 cloves garlic
2 pounds ripe tomatoes - about 5 to 6 medium tomatoes
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup olive oil, preferably extra-virgin
2 tablespoons wine vinegar
1 1/2 cups water

Condiments and garnishes (optional):

Chopped green pepper
Chopped onion
Chopped cucumber
Croutons or diced bread, toasted crisp
Chopped hard boiled egg
Chopped tomatoes

Put the bread in a bowl and add water to cover. Let soak for 5 minutes until softened. Squeeze out the water and place the bread in a blender container (or, if using a hand-held blender, into a mixing bowl) with the garlic. Blend until the bread and garlic are smooth.

Roughly chop the tomatoes. Add to the bread and garlic, and puree. Add the cumin and salt and, with the motor running, add the olive oil in a slow stream. As the oil is incorporated, the gazpacho will turn from red tomato-juice to a paler, peachier color. Blend in the vinegar. Thin the gazpacho with water to the desired consistency.

Place the blended contents in a tureen, bowl or pitcher. Chill until serving time.

Place each of the garnishes in separate small bowls or on a divided relish dish and pass them around the table when the gazpacho is served. Each person can add their desired spoonfuls on to their gazpacho. (All this is optional.)

This gazpacho can also be served, thinned with additional water, in tall glasses for sipping, without the garnishes.