



Creamy Tomato Soup with Grilled Cheese Croutons



Ingredients, Soup:

- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tsp kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 28-ounce can whole peeled tomatoes
- 2 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp sugar
- 3 cups vegetable broth
- ½ cup heavy cream

Ingredients, Grilled Cheese Croutons:

- 8 Tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, at room temperature
- ½ tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 6 thin slices sandwich bread
- 1 cup (4 ounces) shredded sharp Cheddar

Method:

1. To make the soup, heat the butter and olive oil in a Dutch oven over low heat. Add the onion, salt, and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft, 6 to 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 2 minutes more. Sprinkle with the flour to make a roux, and stir constantly for 3 minutes more.
2. Stir in the tomatoes, tomato paste, sugar, and vegetable broth. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste. Remove the soup from the heat and allow it to cool slightly. Working in batches, purée the soup in a food processor or blender or in the pot with an immersion blender. Return the soup to the pot and stir in the cream. Reheat over low heat just until hot. Do not boil.
3. To make the croutons, heat a grill pan or a large skillet over medium-high heat.
4. Mash together the butter and thyme in a small bowl until well blended. Spread one side of each of the bread slices with the thyme butter. Place three slices, butter side down, in the hot pan. Top each slice with the cheese, then the remaining bread slices, butter side up. Grill until the sandwiches are toasted and browned and the cheese has melted, 3 to 5 minutes per side. Remove the sandwiches from the pan and allow them to cool slightly. Cut the sandwiches into 1-inch squares.
5. Serve the soup, accompanied by the Grilled Cheese Croutons.