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Garden gazpacho, served chilled, makes a perfectly refreshing summer soup

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Garden Fresh Gazpacho Photos Susie Iventosch

Garden fresh gazpacho is the perfect summer soup with tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, poblano peppers, jalapeno, cilantro, garlic, grilled red onion and fresh lime juice. Like a liquid salad, this raw veggie soup (served chilled) is so refreshing and delicious in the heat of the summer - quintessential summer fare! The veggies are all puréed together with earthy spices and served with a dollop of plain yogurt or sour cream, and garnished with a squeeze of lime, avocado, and cilantro sprigs, plus a slice of crusty bread for dipping if you so desire.

When selecting the ingredients for your gazpacho, be sure to use only ripe, fresh vegetables. It's fun to vary the vegetables that go into your gazpacho. For example, use yellow tomatoes and yellow bell peppers to create a golden yellow soup one time, followed by red or orange tomatoes and red or orange bell peppers the next. The key to making gazpacho is to balance the mix so that no one ingredient overpowers the rest. It should

be a harmonious blend of seasonal produce. One time while we were visiting Spain, we had a meal where they served four different colors of gazpacho. Traditionally we make the red gazpacho, because red tomatoes are so much more plentiful and easier to find.

This recipe takes some time to prepare all of the veggies - getting them cleaned, seeded, and chopped. Plus we like to grill or sauté our red onion before adding it to the mix because no one in our family enjoys raw onion. But don't worry, if you love raw onions, then by all means, just chop them and add them to the food processor! Gazpacho is best when made several hours or a day ahead so that the flavors have time to meld. This time, I made a quadruple batch of gazpacho and froze half of it. This dish freezes very well for several months. Store it in an airtight container and allow an inch or so at the top for the soup to expand as it freezes. When you thaw it out to serve it, you may want to give it a once over in the food processor just to make sure everything is well blended. If you make a chunky gazpacho, then you may have to process those larger pieces to a more uniform blend after freezing it.

Garden Fresh Gazpacho

Makes approximately 4 cups

INGREDIENTS

1/2 bunch fresh cilantro leaves, stems removed

2 large cucumbers peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped

1 large red, yellow or orange bell pepper, stem and seeds removed and coarsely chopped (or a combination)

1 poblano pepper, stem and seeds removed and coarsely chopped

1 large jalapeno pepper, stem and seeds removed and coarsely diced

1 tomatillo paper skin removed, and diced

1 medium red onion peeled and sliced or chopped (can sauté, grill, or use raw)

6-8 large tomatoes quartered

2 cloves garlic, minced

2-3 tablespoons fresh lime juice

2-3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

2/3 cup tomato sauce

1 teaspoon cumin powder

1 teaspoon mild New Mexico chili powder

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

1 teaspoon sea salt or Himalayan pink salt

Garnishes: nonfat plain Greek yogurt, fresh cilantro sprigs, avocado slices, lime wedges

DIRECTIONS

Clean all veggies and prepare according to the indications on the ingredient list. Then, cut all veggies into medium-sized chunks. Place the first eight ingredients into the bowl of a large food processor, one at a time. I like to puree each veggie separately and then add them to a common bowl once they're puréed. This also gives you the chance to hold some of each back to make chunkier after you've puréed the rest of that ingredient. Pulse processor 6-7 times for a chunky gazpacho and a bit longer for a smoother soup. I like a combination of mostly puréed, but some chunkier of the cucumbers and peppers.

Add remaining ingredients and stir to incorporate. Chill for several hours or overnight. Adjust seasonings to your own desire, in case you like it hotter or milder. Serve soup in chilled bowls and garnish with avocado, plain yogurt, cilantro, and lime wedges.



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