

Chef Lucia's Creamy Tomato Basil Soup

1Tbsp. Olive Oil	1 1/2 Tsps. Basil
2 Cans Diced Tomatoes (with juice)	1/2 Cup Butter
2 Carrots (diced)	1/2 Cup Flour
1 Small Onion (diced)	1 Cup Parmesan Cheese (optional)
3 Celery Sticks (diced)	1 1/2 Cups Half and Half (or whole milk)
2 Tbsps. Tomato Paste	1 Tsp. Salt
4 Cups Chicken Broth	1/4 Tsp. Pepper
1 Tsp. Oregano	1/4 Cup Fresh Basil (optional)

Heat oil in large pot on medium heat. Add carrots, onions and celery, sauté for a few minutes.

Add diced tomatoes, tomato paste, chicken broth, oregano and basil. Bring to gentle boil and cook several minutes until vegetables are tender.

Use blender to puree soup until smooth, (leave if you prefer chunky soup).

Prepare roux in separate pot - Melt butter over medium heat, whisk in flour until golden brown.

Add soup to mixture one ladle at a time until roux is a thick paste, then transfer roux back to soup pot.

Stir in half and half (if you want creamy).

Can be stored in the fridge for 1 week. Can be frozen without cream and cheese.

Enjoy!

* This recipe works well in a crock pot as well.

