

RECIPE

Of tomatoes and vegetables

GAZPACHO

While summer is here already, some of us may still crave a bowl of heart-warming soup. As the weather is already too warm to devour a hot bowl of soup, this recipe features the ultimate cold soup, perfect for May. Gazpacho is a cold soup originating from Andalusia, Spain. It is equally delicious and refreshing, loaded with tomatoes and other hydrating ingredients.

Ingredients

- 1 red beefsteak tomato
- 1 green beefsteak tomato
- ½ red bell pepper
- ½ green bell pepper
- 1 medium cucumber
- 1 small onion
- 2 loaves stale bread
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
- 2 tbsp chopped mint leaves
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper

Method

Cut the loaves of bread into small cubes and soak them in water for 5 minutes while you prepare the rest of the ingredients. Pour cold water in a blender and add roughly chopped bell peppers, tomatoes, mint leaves, peeled and diced cucumber, and onion. Then, squeeze the water out of the soaked bread and add it in along with salt, cumin, and black pepper and give it a whiz. After 30 seconds, remove the vapour cover of the blender lid and pour in olive oil and balsamic vinegar while it is still on. This will emulsify the gazpacho and give it a creamy texture. Serve it cold in a bowl topped with freshly chopped mint and tomatoes. You can also serve this

with herby croutons.

SHAKSHUKA

Shakshuka is a popular breakfast and brunch item in Israel and other parts of the world. Debates still rage over whether it originated from North Africa or the Middle East. Wherever the origin though, it has become a popular dish all over the world because it is amazing how such a scrumptious dish can be so easy to put together.

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cloves garlic



- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp paprika powder
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper
- ½ tsp chilli flakes
- ½ tsp sugar
- 3 eggs
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley

Method

In a non-stick pan, heat olive oil and add finely

chopped onions and garlic. Sauté them until fragrant and add tomato paste and sliced bell pepper. Once slightly cooked, incorporate canned tomatoes and stir for a couple of minutes. Next, add in all the spices one by one and let this mixture cook. After 5 minutes, make three small indents on three sides with the help of the back of a spoon and crack eggs on them individually. Cover with a lid and cook for 10-15 minutes on medium heat. Once the eggs are fully cooked, remove the lid, turn off the heat and sprinkle with fresh, chopped parsley. You can serve this with naan or pita bread.

RATATOUILLE

If you have ever watched Disney Pixar's movie Ratatouille, you may have wondered at some point how this lip-smacking dish is made that let an ordinary chef attain tremendous recognition in the culinary world! Well, this French dish isn't as complicated to make as it may seem. In fact, the ingredients are basic and no fancy techniques are required.

Ingredients

- 1 Italian eggplant
- 2 Roma tomatoes
- 1 medium zucchini
- 1 carrot
- 2 small potatoes

For the sauce —

- 1 cup tomato purée
- 1 red bell pepper
- 2 medium onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley
- 1 tbsp fresh basil
- ½ tsp chilli powder
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper
- ½ tsp sugar

Once the skillet is hot, add the olive oil and cook the onions until they start to sweat. Add the butter and keep cooking, make sure the onions do not burn and are caramelised. When the onions start browning, add the broth slowly, one cup at a time. This helps the process of reduction. Keep cooking till the broth is almost down to two cups and add the fresh cream, stir well. Add the salt



and pepper while cooking, keep stirring so the cream does not curdle. Add the meatballs to the gravy and coat them with the gravy well. Garnish with freshly chopped chives.

The meatballs can be served with mashed potatoes and a berry jam, the traditional way. However, it can be used to make versatile dishes, since the meatballs can be frozen, it is an easy fix for a weeknight meal. The meatballs are extremely filling. It can

For the dressing —

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- ½ tsp crushed black pepper

Method

First, preheat the oven to 160° C for 10 minutes. To make the sauce, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a pan and sauté finely chopped onions and garlic until translucent, and add in diced red bell pepper.

Sauté for a couple of minutes and pour in the tomato purée. Then, add 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon crushed black pepper, chilli powder, and sugar. Stir to combine and finally add in the fresh herbs after turning off the heat. Purée this mixture in a blender, when it is slightly cooled, to get a smooth paste.

To make the dressing, combine 3 tablespoons of olive oil, ½ a teaspoon of crushed black pepper, and 1 teaspoon each of dried thyme, rosemary, and salt.

Slice the eggplant, zucchini, potatoes, and carrot using a mandolin, except the tomatoes, as they must be sliced using a knife. All of the vegetables should be of the same thickness. To assemble, start by spreading the puréed tomato mixture on the base of a baking dish or casserole. Then, create the single layer of vegetables by placing and overlapping the vegetables in a fixed pattern. They should be loosely packed. Finally, pour in the olive oil dressing on top. Wrap the top with aluminium foil and roast for about 40 minutes. Then remove the cover and roast for an additional 30 minutes. You can serve this as a side dish, or with carbs of your choice.

By Fariha Amber

Photo: Fariha Amber

be cooked in a variety of sauces or gravies, accompanied by pasta, rice, vegetables or salad of choice.

CITRUS GLAZED SALMON/BONELESS FISH

Ingredients

- 100-200g salmon/boneless fish
 - 1 tbsp olive oil
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- For the citrus glaze —
- 1 tbsp butter
 - 1 cup orange juice
 - ¼ cup lime juice
 - Orange and lime zest
 - Dried rosemary
 - Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Method

Pat dry the fish and place a medium skillet on low heat. Add the olive oil and wait till the oil is hot. Fry each side of the fish for 2 minutes, and while frying, season with salt and pepper. Cook for longer if the fish still looks raw. Once the fish is fully cooked, place on a plate and let it rest.

Over medium heat, in the same skillet, add 1 tablespoon butter, the zest of orange and a lime. Then add the dried rosemary and the citrus juices, keep cooking on medium heat until it has reduced to a light syrup. Add salt and pepper before adding the fish back onto the skillet, cover with fish with the glaze and serve with a salad or fresh vegetables for a light and nutritious meal.

Photo: Sobia Ameen

IN SEARCH OF COMFORT FOOD

BY SOBIA AMEEN



Weekday Ramadan dinners

SWEDISH MEATBALLS

Ingredients

For the meatballs —

- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 1 cup fine bread crumbs
- 2 red onions (grated)
- 1 kg minced red meat of your choice
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp ground cardamom
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Butter to grease

For the gravy —

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 red onions (chopped)
- 2 tbsp salted butter

- 4 cups broth of your choice
- 1 cup fresh cream
- Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- Chives to garnish

Method

For the meatballs —

Start by preparing a slurry. In a big mixing bowl, crack two large eggs and start whisking, gradually incorporate the milk. Add the fine bread crumbs and the grated red onions to the slurry before adding the minced meat. Start mixing the meat in with the slurry using a wooden spoon or hands to get best results. Mix all the dry spices in a bowl (ground allspice, paprika, ground nutmeg, ground cardamom, salt, pepper) and add it to the minced meat mixture. Once all the ingredients are well incorporated, cover the meat and let it rest for 30 minutes.

When rested, they are ready to be made into meatballs. A small ice-cream scoop or a tablespoon can be used to get similar sized meatballs. While making the meatballs, set the oven to 180°C to preheat the oven. Once the meatballs are made, transfer to a flat baking tray that has been greased with butter. Bake for 20 minutes. Once cooked through, leave out to cool and rest for 30 minutes. The meatballs can be reserved and frozen to be used later during the week.

Tip: You can also make burger patties with the meat mixture and freeze it for later.

For the gravy —

Place a medium sized skillet on low heat.