

Chillin' In The Summer With Gazpacho



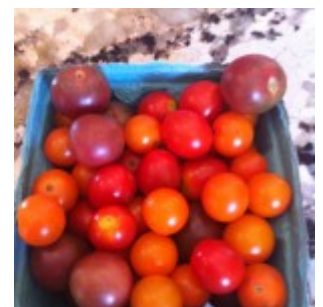
Out here on the East End of Long Island in July, the farm stands are in full swing with beautiful produce every day of the week. Just now the tomatoes are starting to come in and I began to crave a soup that not only beats the July heat, but tastes as fresh as all the vegetables in season. That means gazpacho to

me!



It seems that everyone has a little different take on their gazpacho recipe so I decided to take a less traditional route in developing mine, but not sacrificing any of the wonderful garden flavors. I've done a lot of research on gazpacho recipes and a common theme is the use of tomato juice from a can or V8 juice. It seemed such a shame to me to do that to all of the farm stand vegetables that have been so lovingly grown so I had to find another solution....and I did!

Instead of using tomato juice I took the sweet red and yellow cherry tomatoes available at my favorite farm stand, Balsam Farms, and added olive oil, lime juice, red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, two diced garlic cloves and 1/2 large jalapeño



diced with seeds included and salt. The blender created this beautiful sort of pink sauce that was a perfect substitute for the tomato juice conundrum.



This summer our landscape architect, Jane Lapin, designed and installed for me a beautiful herb garden that is just loaded with so many amazing herbs to choose from. I have a lot of fun experimenting with countless combinations of herbs in my cooking. The variety of oregano is particularly nice and I have loads of parsley and chives so that is what I used in my gazpacho to give it a herbaceous note.



I think that a good gazpacho is a bit chunky while still having the consistency of a soup. So I diced all of my vegetable and added the pureed cherry tomatoes and put about half of the gazpacho in the blender and pulsed a few time to a traditional consistency and then added it back to the rest of the soup.

The last secret is the final touches. I love 20 year old Balsamic vinegar and use it to give tomatoes a deep and sweet flavor. It does cost quite a bit, but you will be amazed at the difference it makes. Once I have made my gazpacho I am tempted to dive right in and eat a bowl, but this soup needs

time to chill and let the flavors fully develop. You can chill it 4 hours before you want to serve it, but overnight is best to bring out all of the subtle flavors of gazpacho.



When you are ready to serve your gazpacho, you can garnish it with some diced onions, cucumber, red bell pepper and celery tossed with a little olive oil and either regular balsamic or a touch of the good stuff or red wine vinegar and put a spoon full on top of the soup. I also like to serve a crostini with some softened goat cheese to round out the meal.



Enjoy!

Amagansett Gazpacho

4 large fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced
3/4 English cucumber, peeled, seeded and finely diced
1/2 large red bell pepper finely diced
1/2 medium size red onion finely diced
1 1/2 large stalks celery finely diced
1 large jalapeno – 1/2 with seeds removed and diced. The second 1/2 diced with seeds and reserve this 1/2.
2 cloves garlic, minced
Zest of one lime
2 tbsp good red wine vinegar
1 tsp finely minced fresh oregano
3 tbsp flat leaf parsley, finely minced
2 tbsp chives, finely minced
1 tsp salt
1/2 tsp ground cumin

1/4 tsp cayenne pepper, more or less to your taste
1 pint cherry tomatoes – an assortment of red and yellow is best
1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
Juice of one lime
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
4 – 6 dashes of Tabasco
1 tbsp 20 year old balsamic vinegar
Salt & pepper to taste

Combine diced tomatoes, cucumber, bell pepper, onions, celery, 1/2 jalapeno with the seeds removed, oregano, parsley, chives, cumin, cayenne, lime zest, 1 tbsp red wine vinegar and 1 tsp salt in large bowl and set aside.

Place cherry tomatoes, olive oil, lime juice, garlic, remaining minced jalapeno with seeds, 1 tbsp red wine vinegar, 1 tbsp regular balsamic vinegar and Worcestershire sauce in blender, cover and process until smooth. Taste and add salt as needed. Pour pureed mixture into the bowl of the tomato and diced vegetables; stir to combine.

Place about 1/2 of the combined tomato mixture, making sure to include the diced vegetable as well. Cover and puree until smooth. Return pureed mixture to the remaining tomato/vegetable mixture and combine well. Add 1 tbsp 20 year old balsamic vinegar and a few dashes of Tabasco and stir again. Taste again for salt, adding a little at a time until taste. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours or overnight.