

Tomato Soup

Serves 6

Make sure to use canned whole tomatoes packed in juice. To obtain 3 cups of juice, use the packing juice as well as the liquid that falls from the tomatoes when they are seeded.

2 (28 ounce) cans whole tomatoes packed in juice, drained, 3 cups juice reserve (see note)

1 1/2 tablespoons dark brown sugar

4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter

2 large shallots, minced (about 1/2 cup)

1 tablespoon tomato paste

Pinch ground allspice

2 tablespoons unbleached all purpose flour

1 3/4 cups low sodium chicken broth

1/2 cup heavy cream

2 tablespoons brandy or dry sherry

Table salt and cayenne pepper

1. Adjust an oven rack to the upper middle position and heat the oven to 450 degrees. Line a large rimmed baking sheet with foil. With your fingers, carefully open the whole tomatoes over a fine mesh strainer set in a bowl and push out the seeds, allowing the juices to fall through the strainer into the bowl; discard the seeds. Spread the seeded tomatoes in a single layer on the foil and sprinkle evenly with the brown sugar. Bake until all the liquid has evaporated and the tomatoes begin to color, about 30 minutes. Cool the tomatoes slightly, then peel them off the foil; transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

2. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the shallot, tomato paste, and all spice. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the shallots are softened, 7 to 10 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Gradually add the chicken broth, whisking constantly to combine; stir in the reserved tomato juice and roasted tomatoes. Cover, increase the heat to medium, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes.

3. Pour the mixture through a fine mesh strainer into a medium bowl; rinse and dry the saucepan. Transfer the tomatoes and solids in the strainer to a blender; add 1 cup of the strained liquid and puree until smooth. Add the pureed mixture and the remaining strained liquid to the saucepan. Add the cream and warm over low heat until hot, about 3 minutes. Off the heat stir in the brandy, season with salt and cayenne to taste and serve. (The soup can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to 2 days. Warm over low heat until hot; do not boil).