

Crock Pot Creamy Tomato Soup

This creamy, rich tasting tomato soup is made in the slow cooker, with tomatoes, herbs, milk and Pecorino Romano cheese, plus the cheese rind for an added flavor boost.

Last night for dinner, we had a big bowl of this soup with some grilled garlic bread and a simple garden salad. For lunch, I usually like to have a small cup with a half sandwich (whole wheat grilled cheese – yum!).

Thanks to my parents, I'm real picky when it comes to soup. I grew up in home where we had homemade soup practically every night. Almost always dinner usually started a meal with a bowl of soup (not something I was always happy about as a kid) but I always loved when mom made her tomato soup.

Her recipes are usually more labor intensive than mine, I much prefer quick and easy. This slow cooked tomato soup, comes pretty close to her original, without all the extra work. I always cook my vegetables on the stove, I think it gives you the best tasting results. You can do this the night before to save time in the morning. What really makes the soup over the top in my opinion, is the cheese rind (you toss it after the soup is done). I always freeze them after I use up my cheese, just to make soups, but don't worry if you don't have one the soup will still turn out fine.

You can also make this on the stove top: just simmer it in a big pot on low for about 1 1/2- 2 hours. If you want to use fresh garden plum tomatoes, as I often do in the summer when I need to use them up, I just blanch them in a big pot of boiling water until the skins crack, then remove them and peel the skins off.

This soup freezes well, so don't worry if this makes too much, you can make it and freeze it in small containers for quick meals on busy weeknights.

And since so many are asking, I have the [6 Quart Hamilton Beach Set 'n Forget Programmable Slow Cooker](#). I love it because you can adjust the time you want it to cook, and it automatically turns to warm when it's done. It also has a probe for meat that automatically shuts off when done. I hated my old crock pot, it burnt everything and my food had a weird taste. This crock pot is so great, I actually own two!

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Servings: 6 • Size: 1-1/2 cups • Old Points: 4 pts • Weight Watcher Points+: 5 pt

Calories: 177 • Fat: 10 g • Carb: 17 g • Fiber: 3 g • Protein: 8 g • Sugar: 8 g

Sodium: 600 mg • Cholest: 21 mg

Ingredients:

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 cup finely diced celery
- 1 cup finely diced carrots
- 1 cup finely diced onions
- 28 oz can whole plum tomatoes, with juice

- 1 tsp thyme
- 1/4 cup fresh basil
- 3 1/2 cups reduced sodium chicken broth (or vegetable for vegetarians)
- Parmesan or Romano cheese rind (optional)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1/3 cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese
- 1 3/4 cups reduced fat (2%) milk, warmed
- salt, to taste
- black pepper, to taste

Directions:

Heat a large skillet over medium heat, then add the oil, celery, carrots and onions; cook 5 to 6 minutes, or until golden. Add to slow cooker.

Pour the juice of the tomatoes into the slow cooker, then roughly crush the tomatoes with your hands; add to slow cooker. Then add chicken (or vegetable broth), the cheese rind (if using) thyme, basil, and bay leaf.

Cover and cook on LOW for 6 hours, until the vegetables get soft and the flavors blend. Remove the cheese rind and, using an immersion blender, blend the soup until smooth (or you can carefully do this in small batches in the blender).

Melt the butter over low heat in a large skillet and add the flour. Stir constantly with a whisk for 4 to 5 minutes. Slowly whisk in about 1 cup of the hot soup, then add the 1 3/4 cups of warmed milk and stir until smooth. Pour back into the slow cooker and stir, add the grated Pecorino cheese and adjust salt and pepper, to taste.

Cover and cook on low 30 more minutes.

Makes about 9 1/4 cups.