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Cream of Tomato Soup

As a nation, we didn't know we loved tomato soup until someone condensed it and put it in a can. That's when it became a steady presence on our tables, a fixture in our pantries and in our imaginations. (It's no accident that Andy Warhol's most famous soup can silkscreen is of tomato soup and not, say, vegetable beef.) To those of us who grew up loving the ready-made stuff, a recipe for homemade cream of tomato soup—a variation popularized in 1900, when Campbell's started printing the recipe on labels—is nothing short of revelatory. Crushed tomatoes bring brightness and body; bacon, a smoky depth; and a generous finish of crème fraîche infuses that signature luxuriousness. It's nuanced and vibrant in ways that the stuff out of a can just can't be. It's—if you'll pardon the expression—m'm, m'm, good.

SERVES 4–6

INGREDIENTS

4 slices thick-cut bacon, finely chopped
2 tbsp. unsalted butter
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
1 medium carrot, finely chopped
3 tbsp. tomato paste
1 tbsp. flour
4 cups chicken stock
2 sprigs thyme
1 bay leaf
1 (15-oz.) can whole, peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed by hand
¼ cup heavy cream
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Crème fraîche, croutons, and finely chopped chives, to garnish



Credit: Todd Coleman

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat bacon in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium heat, and cook until its fat renders and bacon is crisp, about 15 minutes. Add butter, and increase temperature to medium-high; add garlic, onion, and carrot, and cook, stirring, until soft, about 10 minutes. Add tomato paste, and cook, stirring, until lightly caramelized, about 3

minutes. Add flour, and cook, stirring until smooth, about 2 minutes more. Add stock, thyme, bay leaf, and tomatoes, and bring to a boil; reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly reduced, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat, and purée; return to saucepan, and stir in cream. Season with salt and pepper. Divide among bowls; dollop with crème fraîche, and sprinkle with croutons and chives.

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