

Tomato-Bread Soup *with Garlic Crostini*

by Chef Paul Vroman of Max of Eastman Place

Serves Six

Ingredients:

1 head of Garlic
2 Tablespoons Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 large red onion, sliced thinly
6 garlic cloves, smashed and finely chopped
1 Tablespoon fennel seed, toasted
¼ teaspoon chili flakes
2 lbs ripe summer tomatoes, roughly chopped
1 cup white wine (preferably Fox Run Chardonnay)
10 basil leaves
2 cups tomato sauce (preferably homemade)
2 cups day-old sourdough bread, crust removed, 1" dice
Salt and Black Pepper to taste
High Quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil
Parmesan Cheese
Small Basil Leaves
6 Slices of Sourdough Bread, toasted

Procedure:

For the Roasted Garlic:

Pre heat the oven to 375 F.
Trim the top off the head of garlic.
Coat it lightly with olive oil and season with salt and black pepper.
Wrap the garlic in tin foil and roast in the oven for 30-40 minutes until fragrant and soft.
Reserve.

For the Soup:

In a medium soup pot, over medium heat, add the olive oil followed by the red onion and garlic.
Cook them seven minutes or until translucent and soft.
Add the tomatoes, fennel seeds and chili flakes, and season lightly with salt and black pepper.
Cook the mixture for five minutes, or until the tomatoes begin to soften.
Add the wine, basil and bring to a boil, then turn it down to a simmer.
Add the bread and the tomato sauce and cook for thirty minutes.
Working in batches, transfer the soup to a blender and puree until smooth. This step may be omitted for a more rustic texture.
Return the soup to the pot, check the seasoning and prepare to serve.

To Serve:

Ladle the soup into six bowls.
Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and sprinkle parmesan cheese and basil leaves on top.
Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves onto the toasted bread and serve on the side.