

CREAMY TOMATO BASIL SOUP

About 12 cups

I got this recipe from my friend Ann and then tweaked it quite a bit. It is as good as any soup you will eat in a restaurant.

Everyone who tastes it wants more. It is that good! You can use prepared marinara sauce, or make your own from my recipe (p. 140).

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 3 1/2 cups half-and-half
- 1 1/2 cups marinara sauce
- 1 (14.5-ounce) can diced tomatoes or 8 to 10 small vine-ripened tomatoes, diced
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh basil, or 1/2 teaspoon dried
- Coarse salt and ground black pepper

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Whisk in the flour and cook and stir for 5 minutes to slightly brown the mixture. Whisk in the broth. Increase the heat and cook and stir until thickened. Decrease the heat to low, stir in the half-and-half, and simmer for 20 minutes.
2. Stir in the marinara sauce, tomatoes, and basil, and cook until heated through. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve as is chunky-style, or puree in a food processor or blender if you prefer a smooth soup.

Serve with a salad and crackers or hot **corn bread** (p. 241), **Fresh Tomato Bruschetta with Basil** (p. 81), **Italian Bread** (p. 224), **French Baguettes** (p. 225), or **Garlic Bread** (p. 227).

Can be made *Meatless*. Substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth.

CONVERSATION STARTER:

Did you read about the robots being developed that will have personalities? What do you think about that? What does it mean to be human?