



Gazpacho-Style Soup

(makes 4 servings)

Whilst this soup makes for a great start to the day when served warm as a breakfast or early morning soup, it is equally delicious when served very chilled in a glass on a sunny day as an appetiser - the 'hint of Spain' transports you in super-quick time to lazy days on holiday with a bunch of friends intent on having a good time!

Ingredients

6 medium-sized, ripe tomatoes
1 large fennel bulb, trimmed, central stem removed and finely sliced
450ml water
1 teaspoon sea salt crystals
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
½ teaspoon black peppercorns
1 tablespoon light olive oil
1 small onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 large clove garlic, peeled and crushed
½ tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 heaped teaspoons fresh oregano leaves, finely chopped
1 heaped teaspoon tomato purée
Celery salt

Method

Put the tomatoes in a large bowl, cover with boiling water, leave for 30 seconds then drain. Skin the tomatoes, quarter, remove the stems and seeds and chop the flesh roughly.

Put the fennel slices and water in a pot with the salt, bring slowly to the boil, turn down the heat, put a lid on the pot and simmer very gently for 10-15 minutes or until the fennel is tender but still has a bite to it. Remove from the heat and set aside.

Crush the coriander seeds and peppercorns in a pestle and mortar.

Warm the oil in a large soup pot, add the onion and ground spices and sauté gently until the onions are soft (don't let them brown). Add the crushed garlic and sauté for a further 5 minutes.

Add the balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, tomatoes, oregano (leaving a few for topping the soup) and tomato purée and stir well.

Add the fennel with its simmering water, bring the soup to the boil then turn down the heat and simmer gently for 30 minutes.

Remove from the heat and let the soup cool to room temperature before serving with a good shake of celery salt and a few chopped oregano leaves scattered over.