

Roasted Red Pepper and Eggplant Soup

Bon Appétit | March 2001

Eggplant adds a nutty flavor. Open a light-bodied Valpolicella from Italy for the meal.

Yield: Makes 8 servings

ingredients

2 eggplants (about 2 1/2 pounds total), halved

4 red bell peppers (about 22 ounces)

1/4 cup olive oil

2 medium onions, chopped

1 medium leek, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise (white and pale green parts only; about 2 cups)

6 large garlic cloves, minced

8 1/2 cups chicken stock or canned low-salt chicken broth

3 tablespoons tomato paste

1/4 cup chopped fresh basil

2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Parmesan cheese shavings

preparation

Preheat oven to 450°F. Line rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Pierce eggplants all over with fork. Transfer, cut side down, to baking sheet. Roast until tender, about 45 minutes. Cool slightly. Remove peel and discard. Cut eggplants into large pieces. Rinse eggplant pieces under running water. Drain well. Set aside.

Char bell peppers over gas flame or in broiler until blackened on all sides. Enclose in paper bag 10 minutes. Peel, seed and coarsely chop peppers.

Heat oil in large pot over medium-high heat. Add onions and leek and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add garlic; sauté 1 minute. Stir in eggplant, peppers, chicken stock, and tomato paste. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer uncovered until vegetables are tender, about 45 minutes. Stir in basil and thyme. Cool slightly.

Working in batches, puree soup in blender until smooth. Return soup to pot. Season with salt and pepper. Add butter and lemon juice; stir over low heat until soup is heated through, about 5 minutes. (Can be made 1 day ahead. Cover and chill. Bring to simmer before continuing.) Transfer to large bowl; garnish with Parmesan.