

Roasted Red Pepper and Tomato Soup
From The Cook's Life
Makes 4 generous servings

2 large red bell peppers
1 large shallot
1 tablespoon olive oil, approximately
2 large cloves garlic (or 4 small ones)
2 cups low sodium chicken or vegetable broth
2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes, undrained
1 teaspoon dried basil, or more, to taste
about 10 grinds of black pepper
a few dashes ground cayenne, or to taste
salt, to taste
Grated or slivered Parmesan cheese
Crackers, croutons or bread

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a baking sheet.

Cut peppers into about 4 pieces each and discard tops and seeds. Place peppers skin side up on baking sheet. Peel shallot and cut in half. Add to baking sheet. Drizzle peppers and shallot with olive oil. Peel garlic cloves and set aside. Roast peppers and shallot for 10 minutes. Add garlic cloves to the middle of the sheet, drizzle with a little olive oil and return pan to oven for 20 minutes more. Remove the garlic cloves and shallots early if they start to brown too much.

Combine roasted vegetables with broth in a blender and blend until mostly smooth. You can also use an immersion blender or food processor.

Pour the blended soup into a 3-quart pot and set over medium heat. Add tomatoes, basil, black pepper and cayenne. If you want a totally smooth soup, add the tomatoes during the blending step.

Bring soup to a boil and then reduce heat to medium low so the soup just simmers. Cook for about 15 minutes, then taste for salt. You may not need any because of the broth and canned tomatoes. Serve with Parmesan cheese and crackers, croutons or bread.

Soup reheats well. Freeze for longer storage.