



## Creamy Tomato Soup

*Cook's Illustrated*

BAH Note: I used my immersion (stick) blender, because I hate to dirty dishes if I don't have to. But I think that in this instance, you should use a regular blender. The soup was so thick when I went to blend it that I probably wasted more time than it would have taken me to process it in two batches and wash the blender. Lesson learned. Also, if you're looking for an ultra smooth texture, like the condensed soup out of the can, then you'll want to strain your soup before it goes back in the pot. I'm not 100% sold on the flavor, I think it may benefit from the addition of some tomato paste just as the onions are done cooking. This recipe can be easily halved since the quantities used below makes 6 to 8 servings according to CI. And finally, CI says to use a potato masher to break up the tomato into 2 inch chunks. Whatever. I'm going to pretend they didn't utter such foolishness since using diced tomatoes worked just fine for me.

- 1/4 cup olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 medium onion, chopped (about 1 cup)
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced (I omitted this completely)
- Pinch of hot red pepper flakes - optional (I used this but really didn't like what it did to the final product)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 (28 ounce) cans whole tomatoes in juice
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 3 slices white sandwich bread, crusts removed, torn into pieces (I used a white wheat bread to make this SB Friendlier)
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 tablespoons brandy - optional
- 1/4 cup fresh chives, chopped

Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat until shimmering. Add onion, garlic, red pepper flakes (if using), and bay leaf. Cook, stirring frequently, until onion is translucent, 3 to 5 minutes. (BAH Note - This is where I would add about a tablespoon of tomato paste and let it brown for about 2 minutes.) Stir in tomatoes and their juices. Stir in sugar and bread. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the bread is completely saturated and begins to break down, about 5 minutes (BAH Note - mine took more like 10 to 15 minutes). Remove and discard bay leaf.

Working in batches, transfer soup to a blender. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil and blend until the soup is smooth and creamy, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer blended soup to a large bowl and repeat with remaining soup and oil. Strain soup back into the pot through a mesh strainer. Stir in chicken broth and brandy (if using). Return to a boil and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve garnished with chives.

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