

Tomato-Fennel Soup with Garlic Croutons and Parmesan Cheese (“Fields of Greens”
Annie Somerville)

A delicious soup for the early fall, made with late harvest tomatoes and the first fennel of the season. The acidity of the tomatoes will retard the cooking of the vegetables, so be sure they're very tender before adding them. Include the fennel trimmings in the stock; they'll enrich the flavor.

1 quart vegetable stock; add 2 cups canned tomatoes, ½ tsp fennel seed, ½ tsp anise seed
1 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, diced, about 2 cups
salt
1 tsp anise seed, ground
1 tsp fennel seed, ground
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 medium-size carrots, diced, about 1 cup
2 medium-size fennel bulbs, quartered lengthwise, cored, and thinly sliced, about 2 cups
½ cup dry sherry
2 lbs fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and pureed, about 3 cups
pepper
sugar
garlic croutons
grated parmesan cheese

Make the stock and keep it warm over low heat.

Heat the olive oil in a soup pot and add the onions, ¾ tsp salt, the anise, and the ground fennel. Sauté over medium heat until the onions are soft, then add the garlic, carrots, and sliced fennel. Cover the pan and cook the vegetables until very tender, about 5 minutes. Remove the lid, add the sherry, and cook for 1 or 2 minutes, until the pan is nearly dry. Add the tomato puree, 1 quart stock, and ½ tsp salt; cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Add a few pinches of sugar if the soup tastes acidic. Serve with garlic croutons and freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Garlic Croutons:

1 to 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, as needed
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
¼ French baguette, thinly sliced

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Combine the olive oil and garlic. Lay the slices of baguette on a baking sheet and brush them lightly with the garlic oil. Bake for about 8 minutes, until the croutons are crisp and lightly browned.