



Gazpacho – A Cool Spanish Tomato Soup

MAKES 8 SERVINGS • PREP TIME: 20 minutes

Here's a wonderful gazpacho recipe from my friend, chef and cookbook author, Rebecca Katz. I was blessed to taste her delightful gazpacho and it's full of tomatoes and other garden-fresh veggies that your body and palate are going to love! My husband declared "that avocado cream is like a floating party in your mouth!" And it is true. Here's the recipe and a link to [her beautiful website](#).

Some folks like shots of tequila. Well, my choice of a shot is much, much healthier. Take this Mediterranean gazpacho. It makes a hit of V-8 look like amateur hour. The great part about gazpacho is it's really a vegetable orgy; cucumbers, red bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, red onions, fennel, garlic. At this point readers often scream, imagining they'll look like a bunch of nine-fingered piano players after all that veggie chopping. Believe me, I know—at culinary school, gazpacho prep is the equivalent of Ninja Knife Skills Boot Camp, where teachers walk around the kitchen with (I'm not kidding) rulers to make sure each veggie is uniformly diced. That's nuts, and unnecessary; here we toss everything—veggies, spices, herbs, oil—all into Vinny the Vita Mix, add a little olive oil and shazam! It's party time. I took this to an Independence Day dinner and poured out the cheer into shot glasses topped with a little avocado cream. You know you're doing something right when everyone corners you for the recipe (I'm an easy touch on that one). This is like a drinking a Virgin Mary. No hangovers. Promise.

3 cups tomato juice (low sodium, I like Knudsen's Brand)

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon Grade A Dark Amber maple syrup

1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon, sea salt

1/2 teaspoon cumin

1/4 teaspoon coriander

1/8-teaspoon cayenne

2 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped

1 medium fennel bulb, cut into quarters

3 stalks celery, roughly chopped

1 English cucumber, peeled, halved and seeded, roughly chopped

1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, roughly chopped

1 pint cherry tomatoes

1 small red onion, roughly chopped

1/4 cup basil and, or cilantro roughly chopped

Avocado Cream with Basil

1 medium avocado

3/4 teaspoon lemon juice

2 tablespoons water

1/8 teaspoon sea salt

2 teaspoons fresh basil, coarsely chopped

To make avocado cream place the ingredients in blender and blend until very smooth. Transfer to a small bowl. No need to rinse blender before proceeding.

Place the tomato juice, lemon juice, maple syrup, olive oil, spices, vegetables and fresh herbs in a high-speed blender and process until velvety smooth. Taste. You may need another pinch of salt or an extra drop of maple syrup. Pour into small glasses and garnish with a dollop of avocado cream.