

creamy zucchini soup with parmesan and cherry tomatoes

This simple, herb-filled soup is lovely hot or cold (see Cook's Notes) and contains a surprise of fresh tomato added to the bowl just before serving. The tomato cooks slightly in the hot soup or provides even more textural contrast in the cold. Along with some sliced fresh vegetables or whole wheat toast, this is a complete summer meal. While it does contain some half and half and grated Parmesan, the calories are fairly low if you're serving no other protein.

For vegan option, use vegetable broth and omit cheese and half and half.

8 servings

3 Weight Watchers Points Plus

160 calories

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- Kosher salt
- Ground cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons **each** fresh basil, dill, and thyme, minced plus extra julienne basil for garnish*
- 1/2 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 medium zucchini, chopped (about 4 cups)
- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 1/2 quarts chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/4 cup *each* grated Parmesan cheese and half-and-half or light cream (*omit for vegan option*)
- 1/2 cup sliced cherry tomatoes, assorted colors (*can used chopped larger tomatoes*)

Briefly heat (30 seconds) 1/2 teaspoon black pepper and olive oil in an 8-quart Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, celery, carrots; season with 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/8 teaspoon cayenne. Stir in basil, thyme, parsley, dill, and bay leaf. Let cook, stirring often, 5 or 6 minutes or until softening, adding garlic during last minute or two.

Add zucchini and potatoes; heat through. Pour in broth, cover and bring to a boil. Lower heat to a simmer and cook until vegetables are tender--another 15 minutes or so. Remove bay leaf.

Using an immersion blender, puree in pot or very carefully pulse in batches in a blender or food processor and return to pot. Taste and adjust seasonings. Stir in Parmesan and half and half, if using, and warm through. Do not boil.

Add a few fresh sliced or chopped tomatoes to each bowl; ladle soup over tomatoes. Garnish with reserved basil. Serve hot.

**Most any one herb or any combination will work if you don't have all three in the garden.*

Cook's Notes: For cold soup, let come to room temperature after adding cheese and cream, if using. Chill for 8 hours or overnight, and garnish with tomatoes and basil when serving.

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