

Welcome back, Food Fans.

I've always said that one of my favorite meals is a grilled cheese sandwich and a bowl of soup, and one of my favorite soups with grilled cheese is tomato soup. Tomato soup doesn't just go well with a grilled cheese, it's good with so many other dishes and even by itself. My current favorite when it comes to tomato soup is

Hot and Spicy Tomato Soup

This is a variation of the classic that I concocted myself. It's quick and easy and oh so tasty. I'll often make this recipe for lunch. The recipe makes enough for two very full bowls of soup, but can easily be scaled up to make more.

Here's what you'll need:

2 tablespoons butter

½ Vidalia onion, small diced

1 jalapeno

1 clove garlic, minced

2 cans petite diced tomatoes with

Italian seasoning or garlic basil seasoning

A handful of cherry or grape tomatoes

1 cup chicken broth

¼ heavy cream (optional)

Place a soup pot over medium-high heat and melt the butter. Once the butter is melted, add in the diced onion. Cook until translucent, stirring occasionally.

While the onions cook, cut the stem from the jalapeno. Then cut the jalapeno in half. Remove the seeds from one half and discard.

If you want your soup spicier, keep the seeds, if you want it less spicy discard all of the seeds, or leave the jalapeno out altogether.

Dice the jalapeno and the remaining seeds. Be sure to wash your hand thoroughly after handling hot peppers.

Once the onion is translucent, add the minced garlic and the pepper and seeds to the pot. Sauté until aromatic. This should take between 30 seconds and a minute.

Next, add the canned tomatoes with their juices, small tomatoes, and chicken broth. Bring to a boil, and then reduce to a simmer and cover.

Simmer until the whole tomatoes are soft and have ruptured. This should take 10 to 15 minutes.

Blend soup with an immersion blender or standing blender until it reaches the desired smoothness. Add cream to taste or to cut spiciness as needed.

Serve hot with or without grilled cheese.

Happy Eating!