

## CREAMY TOMATO SOUP

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This huge pot of tomato soup will provide dinner for tonight, but most of it will end up in smaller containers in my freezer for future meals. If you are not interested in freezing leftovers, feel free to cut the recipe in half.

### Ingredients

- 1 large onion, diced
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 8 cups of broth, I use 2 (32 ounce) containers chicken or vegetable stock
- 4 28 ounce cans of tomatoes
- 4 tablespoons tomato paste
- 6 sprigs of fresh thyme
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 cup of white wine
- 2 cups heavy cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

### Optional Soup Garnishes

- Toasted garlic croutons
- Fresh basil leaves chiffonade (To chiffonade basil leaves, stack the leaves, roll into a tight bundle and cut into thin slices.)
- Fresh thyme leaves
- Spoonful of pesto and pine nuts



In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, melt the butter. Add the chopped onions and sauté, stirring occasionally until soft and translucent. Add the chopped garlic. Stir in flour and cook, stirring for about 2 – 3 minutes to cook out the raw taste of the flour but not long enough to brown the flour. Pour in 4 cups of broth and whisk constantly until the soup begins to thicken.

Add the remaining broth, cans of tomatoes, tomato paste, wine, sugar, salt and pepper. I always add a little sugar to foods containing a lot of tomatoes. I find that it cuts the acidity and tastes better...not to mention it eliminates my need for antacids afterwards. Tie the sprigs of thyme together with a piece of kitchen twine and add to the pot. Bring to boil, while stirring occasionally, and reduce the heat and simmer for approximately 30 minutes. Remove and discard the thyme bundle. Most of the thyme leaves should have fallen off the sprigs. If you have an emersion blender, my favorite kitchen appliance, puree until smooth. If you don't have an emersion blender, cool slightly and working in batches, transfer the soup to a blender and puree until smooth. Return the puree to the pot and reheat over medium heat.

Whisk in the heavy cream and season with salt and pepper to taste.

**Freezing Tip:**

Before freezing, make sure the soup is cool. I have placed warm soup in the freezer only to find a mountain like hump in the center when it freezes. I actually keep it in the refrigerator overnight before freezing. Although that's not required, I find that the soup freezes more evenly when it is not just cooled, but chilled.

I recommend using hard plastic or glass containers to freeze anything made with tomatoes as they do not discolor. If you are freezing in a hard plastic container or glass jar, do not place the cover over the soup after filling. Place the uncovered container in the freezer. As with anything, while the soup freezes, it will expand. If you cover the container, it may break. If you wait until after the soup has frozen and expanded to replace the cover, your container is safe in the freezer. This process allows you to freeze the soup in attractive containers perfect for gifting.