

TOMATO SOUP

1 – 1¼ kg ripe tomatoes
1 medium onion
1 small carrot
1 stick celery
2 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp tomato puree
a good pinch of sugar
2 bay leaves
1.2 litres hot vegetable stock, (made with bouillon powder or vegetable stock cubes).

Wash the tomatoes and cut into quarters removing the hard core. Peel the onion and carrot and cut into small pieces. Slice the celery to roughly the same size. Heat the olive oil in a large heavy-based pan and add the onion, carrot and celery. Keeping the heat low, cook stirring occasionally until soft and faintly coloured, about 10 minutes.

Add the tomato puree, stir to coat the vegetables and then follow with the tomatoes, the bay leaves, a good pinch of sugar and a little freshly ground black pepper. Stir to mix, put the lid on and cook on a low heat for 10 minutes to allow the tomatoes to shrink and their juice to flow.

Add the stock, bring to the boil, put the lid back on the pan and turn back down to a low heat. Cook gently stirring occasionally for 25 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat, remove the bay leaves and blend until smooth. Reheat to serve and check the seasoning. This soup is delicious with a teaspoon of fresh pesto in each portion. (Please serve plain for the Show).

Can be frozen for three months.