

Creamy Sun-Dried Tomato Soup with Cheese Panini



TOTAL: 35 MIN

4 SERVINGS

STAR INGREDIENT: OIL-PACKED SUN-DRIED TOMATOES

This recipe riffs on the classic American combination of cream of tomato soup alongside grilled cheese sandwiches. In addition to fresh tomato, I've added plump, oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, which contribute loads of flavor and give the soup a thick, luscious texture. In place of American cheese and white bread, I've used crusty ciabatta rolls and fragrant, silky Fontina cheese.

- 1 **tablespoon unsalted butter**
- 1 **tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 **small onion, chopped**
- 1 **garlic clove, sliced**
- ½ **cup oil-packed sun-dried tomatoes, drained and coarsely chopped**
- 1 **tomato, diced**
- 3 **cups chicken stock or low-sodium broth**
- 2 **thyme sprigs**

Salt and freshly ground pepper

- ¼ **cup heavy cream**
- 4 **ciabatta rolls, split**
- ½ **pound Italian Fontina cheese, sliced**

1. In a large saucepan, melt the butter in the olive oil. Add the onion and garlic and cook over moderately high heat, stirring until softened, about 4 minutes. Add the sun-dried tomatoes, diced tomato, stock and thyme. Season with salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Cover and simmer over low heat until the vegetables are very soft, 20 minutes. Discard the thyme sprigs.
2. Preheat a panini press. Transfer the soup to a blender, add the cream and puree until smooth. Return the soup to the saucepan and season with salt and pepper. Keep the sun-dried tomato soup warm over moderate heat.
3. Fill the ciabatta rolls with the sliced cheese and press until the bread is crispy and the cheese is melted. Serve the soup with the cheese panini on the side.

WINE Light-bodied, herbal Chianti: 2005 Ruffino.