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Get Cooking

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Retro Tomato & Prawn Cocktail

For 4
2 tomatoes
225 g/8 oz best North Atlantic peeled prawns
Little gem lettuce
Dressing
1 tbsp tomato ketchup (pg 139)
3 tbsps Greek yogurt or crème fraîche
3 tbsps mayo
Juice of 1 lemon
1 small clove garlic, crushed
Few drops of Tabasco, horseradish or wasabi sauce
Salt
Cayenne pepper

Eat with: Slices of brown bread and butter.

variations

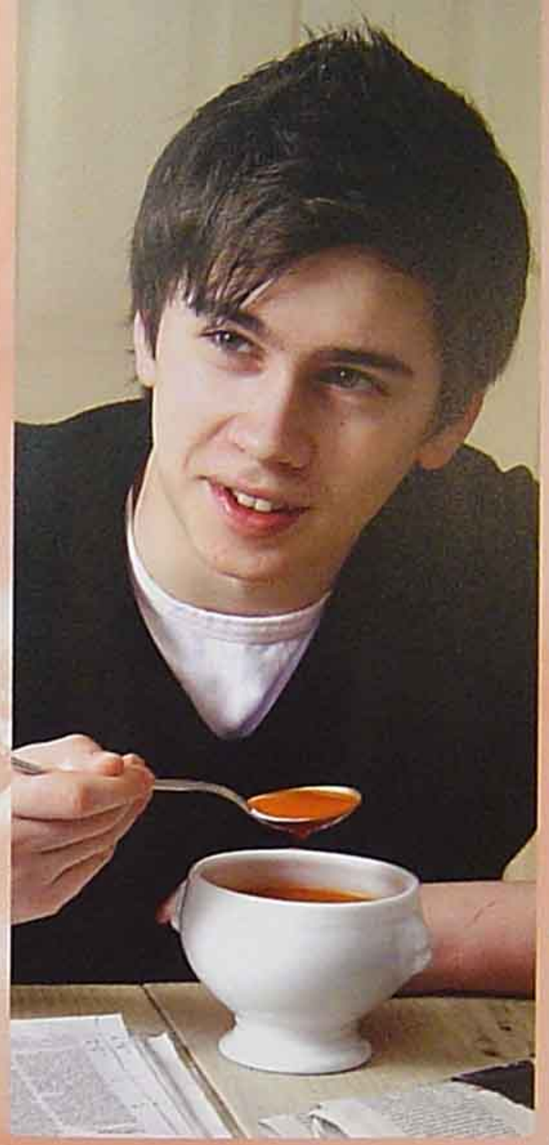
AVOCADO
Chop fresh avocado into the mix and sit it on bread for an open sandwich.
TORTILLA
Wrap it up in a soft tortilla.

Lovely and light with a bit of a bite. Prawns get a cool double tomato dose. Jess piles this one high for a romantic starter. PS Prawns are so good for you…

Method

1. Skinning: Stick tomatoes into a large heatproof bowl. Pour boiling water over them. Leave for 2 minutes. Drain into a colander.
2. Peel the skins off. Chop tomatoes into quarters. Remove seeds with a teaspoon. Cut remaining flesh into tiny pieces.
3. Dressing: Mix all dressing ingredients well. Taste and adjust the balance of flavours.
4. Piling: Slap a bit of diced tomato on a plate or into the base of a short tumbler or glass. Cover with a bit of shredded lettuce.
5. Mix ⅔ of the dressing into the prawns and remaining diced tomato. Sit this on top of the lettuce. Top with remaining dressing.





Lovely Tomato & Garlic Soup

Roast your tomatoes for this awesome soup and you'll get the best out of them. Blasting them with heat and garlic maximizes their flavour. Tomatoes are health gods.

For 4
900 g/2 lb ripe medium-sized tomatoes
3–4 tbsps olive oil
2 large onions, chopped
1 carrot, peeled and sliced
1 stick celery, sliced
1 head of garlic
600 ml/1 pint water
2 tsps caster sugar
2 tbsps parsley or coriander
Salt and black pepper

Eat with:
Good warm crusty bread
Croutons (pg 10)
Grated Parmesan or Cheddar
A whirl of sour cream
Some basil leaves smashed with a bit of balsamic vinegar, salt and sugar

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/425°F/gas 7.
2. Roast tomatoes: Sit them on a baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil. Roast for 20–25 minutes or till their skins split.
3. Vegetable base: Meantime heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a large pan on low heat. Slap in onions, carrot and celery. Cook gently for 5–10 minutes till soft and sweating. Stir with a wooden spoon.
4. Garlic: Slice the very top off the whole garlic. Separate cloves. Sit them on the baking tray with roasting tomatoes. Drizzle with oil. Bake with tomatoes for a further 10–15 minutes till soft. Remove.
5. Soup: Smush the garlic out of its skin. Careful, it's hot. Tip tomatoes and garlic cloves in with the sweated vegetables. Add water, sugar, herbs and seasoning. Bring to the boil then reduce immediately. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes.
6. Remove from the heat. Cool for a bit then blitz in a blender till smooth. Reheat, taste and adjust seasoning.

Tuna & Mash Dressed up in Tomato

For 2
2 tuna steaks, each 175 g/6 oz in weight
Olive oil
Garlic, peeled
Mash
450 g/1 lb potatoes
1 clove garlic, peeled
55 ml/2 fl oz milk
25 g/1 oz butter
Lemon juice
Any herb
Salt and black pepper
Drizzle
1 tsp Dijon mustard
Pinch sugar
1 tbsp red wine or sherry vinegar
55 ml/2 fl oz olive oil
Pinch of salt
2–3 tomatoes, chopped
6 black olives, chopped (optional)
1–2 tbsps dill chopped, (optional)

Simply lovely. Simply healthy. Fresh tomato in a punchy dressing lifts griddled tuna beautifully…

Method

1. Mash: Bring a pan of lightly salted water to boil. Peel potatoes and cut into large chunks. Add to water with garlic.
2. Boil for 20 minutes or till tender. Test by poking the spuds with a knife.
3. Drain. Slap back into the warm pan on a low heat. Shake the pan to dry them for a minute without scorching.
4. Add the milk and butter to the pan to warm. Remove. Mash the spuds and garlic with a masher or fork till ultra smooth. Add a good squeeze of lemon juice, any herb and lots of seasoning. Cover and keep warm.
5. Drizzle: Whisk the mustard, sugar, vinegar, oil and salt together. Add the tomatoes and olives and dill if using.
6. Tuna: Rub a griddle pan very lightly with oil. Put it on to heat.
7. Mix the olive oil and garlic. Rub it into and over the tuna.
8. Slap the fish onto a sizzling hot griddle. Press down with a fish slice so it marks up well. Cook for 2–3 minutes per side but never overdo. Tuna is at its most tender when still pink in the middle.
9. Assemble: Slap a heap of lovely creamy mash on each plate. Stick the fish on there. Drizzle tomato dressing over the top. Perfect with green leaves and green beans.

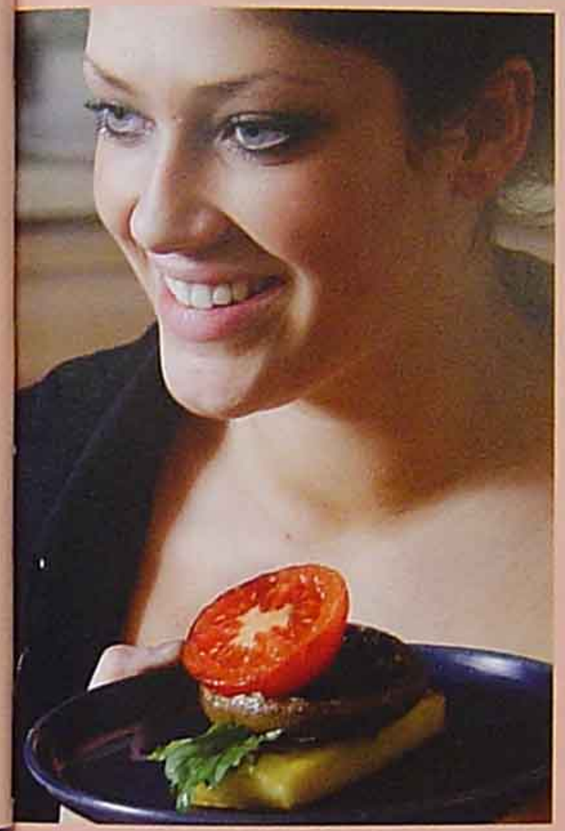
variations

TOMATO DRESSED SALMON
At STEP 7 brush salmon fillets with a mix of soy, sugar and Chinese rice wine or rice vinegar. At STEP 9 top with tomato drizzle and bits of sushi ginger.

ANOTHER LAYER
Top tuna or salmon with a mix of crème fraîche and chopped spring onion.



Sexy Tomato & Mushroom on Polenta



I reckon this makes a perfect summer dish. Tomatoes are definitely at their best when they're just picked. Crisp griddled polenta is well easy and makes an impressive addition. This is simple to make yet chic and delicious.

For 2
Polenta
½ tsp salt
1.2 litres/2 pints water
200 g/7 oz fastcook polenta
50 g/2 oz butter
2 handfuls grated Parmesan (optional)
2 tbsps chopped sage or rosemary (optional)
Topping
1 large tomato, sliced in half
2 field mushrooms
1 clove crushed garlic
Olive oil
Handful rocket
Balsamic vinegar

Method

1. Polenta: Boil the water and salt in a large pan. Add polenta in a steady stream. Stir with a long-handled spoon or whisk. Caution. It spits and bubbles. Reduce heat. Simmer for 5 minutes. Add butter and cheese and herbs if using.
2. Pour while hot into a lightly-oiled tin approximately 28 x 18 x 4 cm/11 x 7 x 1¼ in, or over greaseproof paper. Leave to cool.
3. Chill in fridge if not using immediately. Cut into fingers or squares when ready.
4. Topping: Sit the tomato and mushrooms in a baking dish. Mix the garlic into the olive oil. Brush over the vegetables. Leave to marinate for a while or use immediately.
5. Preheat oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6.
6. Bake the tomato and mushrooms for 15 minutes.
7. Meantime, heat a griddle pan till well hot. Brush polenta squares with olive oil. Slap them onto the griddle to sizzle. Don't turn till crisped and marked up. Cook on all sides.
8. Assemble: Put a slice of polenta on each plate. Top with rocket, mushroom and tomato. Drizzle with a little balsamic and oil.





Fish & Chips & Yorkshire Caviar

Another fine multicultural feast. If you can't get to the sea – make this. You'll be there. Tasty Italian pesto and Parmesan lift the fish. Big chips and peas bring it home. Not a Parmesan fan? Stretch for the Cheddar…

For 2

350 g/12 oz potatoes, peeled
1 tbsp olive oil
Sea salt
1 tbsp butter
2 white fish fillets, skin on (cod, haddock or coley, 175 g/6 oz or big as you like)
1–2 tbsps good bought or homestyle pesto (pg 139)
3–4 tbsps grated Parmesan
Tin of mushy peas
Juice of 1 lemon
A bit of fresh mint, finely chopped (optional)

variations

TOMATO & PESTO
At STEP 6 spread a little lush tomato sauce or passata on half the fillet.

SWEET POTATO CHIPS
Peel sweet potatoes. Cut into chunks. Toss in sunflower oil and a bit of sea salt. Bake till caramelized. Lovely.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/425°F/gas 7.
2. **Chips:** Boil potatoes for 10 minutes. Drain. Cut into large oven chips. Roll them in the olive oil and sea salt.
3. Lay on a baking tray. Cook for 30–40 minutes.
4. **Fish:** Ten minutes before you eat, melt oil and butter in a frying pan till hot. Fry the fish, skin side down for 3–4 minutes till it's crispy.
5. Move the fish carefully onto to a baking tray, using a fishslice.
6. Spread a thin layer of pesto over the top of each fillet. Sprinkle generously with freshly grated Parmesan.
7. Cook in the oven for 5 minutes or till white and cooked through and flaky. Pierce with a knife to check. (Larger portions can take way longer.)
8. **Mushy peas:** Warm through adding a good spritz of fresh lemon and a bit of mint. Eat with chips, homestyle tomato ketchup (pg 139) and a bit of malt vinegar.

Swiss Cheese Fondue

Creamy, cheesy, dead luxurious. Fondue's a posh cheese sauce to dunk chunks of bread in. It's speedy to prep and easy to do. Get a load of mates round for a fondue party.

For 4

1 large clove garlic, halved
300–400 ml/½–¾ pint white wine
275 g/10 oz Gruyère cheese and 275 g/10 oz Emmenthal cheese, grated
1 tbsp Kirsch or water
1 tbsp cornflour
Black pepper
Freshly grated nutmeg
Best baguette or crusty bread in bite-sized cubes

Other dunkers

Boiled new or fingerling potatoes.

Eat with:

Tomato & onion salad (pg 140)
Green salad (pg 140)

Method

1. Prepare all ingredients and accompaniments before you get cooking.
2. Rub cut garlic all round the inside of a saucepan or fondue pot.
3. Tip wine in and put on hob. Heat till it just simmers. Don't rush it.
4. Add cheese bit by bit, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon. It takes time to melt down to a smooth sauce between additions.
5. Put Kirsch or water into a small bowl with cornflour. Mix together.
6. When the fondue mix eventually bubbles (don't let it burn) stir in liquid cornflour, pepper and nutmeg. Keep stirring as it thickens.
7. Very carefully carry fondue pot over to the lit burner on the table. Take spoon so you can stir. Sit it over a low heat.
8. Sit. Stick warmed bread onto fondue forks. Dunk. Eat 'em.

