Plant-Based Soups

SPANISH TOMATO SOUP
(C. Barnett)

¼ cup water or dry vermouth
½ medium onion, chopped
1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced
One red bell pepper, seeded and chopped*
One 28-oz can diced or crushed tomatoes*
One can garbanzo beans, drained
½ tsp salt
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp smoked paprika
¼ cup coconut milk or other plant milk (optional)*
1 cup frozen green peas

½ to ¾ cup toasted ground almonds
Fresh coriander or Italian (flat) parsley (optional)

*See alternative option below.

I make this recipe in late summer when I have more tomatoes than I know what to do with, but you can use canned tomatoes.

In a large pot, sauté the onions and garlic in water or dry vermouth until the onions become transparent. Add the peppers and sauté until soft. If you prefer, you can use roasted red peppers from a jar (use the equivalent of one whole pepper).

Add one can of crushed or diced tomatoes; or if you have garden tomatoes, add about 4 cups of fresh tomatoes, either just diced or previously cooked. If the tomatoes have already been cooked down, just add them to the pot; if you are adding cut-up fresh tomatoes, leave time for them to cook down a bit; should take about 10-15 minutes.

At this point, if you want a smoother soup, you can blenderize all or part of the mixture. An immersion blender makes it possible to keep the soup in the pot while you blend it.

Add the drained garbanzo beans and the salt and spices. Cook the soup for another 10 minutes. If using, add the coconut milk towards the end. If you don't have coconut or other plant milk on hand but want a creamy texture, whisk 1-2 tbsp of tahini with water and then add to the soup. Add the green peas just before serving and give them just enough time to heat through, but stay green.

Serve the soup hot with toasted chopped almonds. (You can toast them in a 200 degree oven for about 5 minutes.) Serve garnished with fresh coriander or parsley if you wish.

MEXICAN OATMEAL SOUP
(adapted from Y. Y Tarr, *NY Times Bread & Soup Cookbook)*

This is a great soup to make when you have a bumper crop of tomatoes. Add more tomatoes than called for in the recipe if you have them—you can't overdo it.

1½ cups regular oatmeal (rolled oats)
1 onion, diced
2 or more cloves of garlic, minced
5 cups water (can include some vegetable broth)
2 to 4 large fresh tomatoes, chopped
¼ to ½ tsp salt, or 1 tsp "chicken" bouillon or seasoning*

<u>Toasting the oatmeal</u>
Place the oatmeal in a dry skillet and turn the heat to high. Watch the toasting process carefully and do not burn the oats! As soon as you can smell the oats toasting, it's time to turn off the heat completely, and let the residual heat toast the oats while you stir them constantly. The oats will get slightly golden and will smell delicious! Set aside.

In a large pot, sauté the onion and garlic in water, white wine, or vermouth until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add 5 cups of water and the chopped tomatoes and reserved oatmeal, bring to a boil then lower to simmer and cook about 10 minutes.

*If you use a vegan "chicken" broth or seasoning, it will contain salt, so no need to add any other salt. If you use Better than Bouillon "No Chicken" Base, found in a jar, be very careful; this brand also makes real Chicken Base.



TOMATO-CORN CHOWDER
(adapted from https://www.veggieinspired.com/spicy-summer-corn-soup/)

¼ cup water, white wine or dry sherry
1 onion, diced
1 clove garlic, minced
4 cups water or veg broth or combination
1 bell pepper, diced (any color)
1 jalapeño, ribs and seeds removed, diced (optional, or use a small part if you don't like much "heat")
½ tsp cumin
½ tsp smoked paprika
Kernels from 3-4 ears cooked fresh corn (about 2 to 3 cups) (or use frozen corn)
2 or more chopped fresh tomatoes or one 15-oz can diced tomatoes
Lime or lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Hot sauce (optional)
½ cup soy milk or other plant milk, added at the end (opt.)
Optional garnishes: cilantro, chopped scallions, etc.

In a large pot, sauté the onion and garlic in the liquid until it starts to be translucent, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the water or veg broth, peppers, spices, corn, and tomatoes. Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer for 20 minutes. If you want a creamier soup, let it cool slightly, then blend the soup partially with an immersion blender. Adding plant milk at the end also adds creaminess. Before serving, add some lime or lemon juice, salt and pepper.