

# Mark's Kitchen

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## Tomato-Basil Soup with Shrimp

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

One of my favorite culinary tricks for making creamy, comforting soups without dairy is substituting cashews for heavy cream or butter in recipes. Cashews are mild in flavor and lend a creaminess that you can't get from other nuts. They also happen to be quite hypoallergenic, which is helpful for those with tree nut allergies.

- 1 cup raw cashews
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 celery rib, diced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 (28-ounce) can tomato puree
- 1 1/2 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1/4 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup tightly packed fresh basil leaves, plus extra chopped basil for garnish
- freshly ground black pepper
- 20 large cooked, peeled shrimp

Step 1: Place the cashews in a small, heatproof bowl and cover with 2 cups of boiling water. Cover the bowl and allow the cashews to sit for 15 minutes, then drain and reserve the nuts.

Step 2: While the cashews are soaking, heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, celery and bay leaf to the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are soft and beginning to brown, about 10 minutes.

Step 3: Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 2 more minutes. Add the tomato puree, chicken stock, almond milk, cashews and salt. Bring to a simmer, then reduce the heat to medium-low and cook for 15 minutes.

Step 4: Remove the bay leaf and transfer the hot soup to a blender, and very carefully puree the soup starting on low speed, making sure to vent the lid (see note). Once the soup is pureed, add the basil and give it a quick final pulse in the blender.

Step 5: Divide the shrimp among four soup bowls and ladle the soup into each bowl. Sprinkle a pinch of black pepper over each bowl of soup, garnish with chopped basil, and serve.

*Note:* Always be very careful when pureeing hot liquids in a blender. The heat from the liquid can cause the pressure in the blender to build up under the lid, and when the blender is turned on, the top can blow off and your hot soup will go everywhere. Keep the lid vented by removing the small window insert from the middle of the blender lid; hold a towel over the open window to prevent splattering. Always start on the lowest speed possible.

*Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories: 360, Fat: 21 g, Saturated Fat: 3.5 g, Cholesterol: 55 mg, Fiber: 6 g, Protein: 16 g, Carbohydrates: 32 g, Sodium: 490 mg*