

# K's Kitchen: Turning tomatoes into soup

By Kathryn Reed

Sue scored us a huge bag of homegrown tomatoes. The weather forecast was for overnight lows in the 30s. I knew those tomatoes would soon be soup.

In March 2008 we took a soup class taught by Steve Fernald at Lake Tahoe Community College. The following recipe is my favorite one from the class.



I correctly remembered it was a bit involved to make. Where were my classmates when I needed them? I soon realized why I had never made it in all these years.

But then I tasted it ... and again two days later. It really is a delicious soup. It's just a bit labor intensive.

I'm so glad I made extra because it's going to be part of my dinner when we go on our girls' camping trip.

But I was concerned about the cream, so I emailed Fernald and asked him about freezing the soup.

"There isn't any reason it couldn't be. If I remember, there is a little cream or dairy that is added toward the end. Even if you substituted almond milk or something similar – dairy and milk-substitutes don't freeze well so better to not add those things before freezing. They can be added at service," Fernald said.

The recipe is from Anna Thomas' "New Vegetarian Epicure."

## Wild Mushroom and Charred Tomato Soup

2 ounces dried porcini

1 T plus 1 tsp olive oil

2 T butter

3 large onions (1½ pounds) quartered and sliced

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1 bay leaf

Salt and pepper to taste

½ tsp dried whole thyme, or 1-2 tsp fresh

3 pounds ripe tomatoes

4 ounces fresh shiitake, or other wild mushrooms

1 C dry red wine

3 C vegetable broth

½ C cream

Cover the dried porcini with boiling water, set them aside to soak for at least 30 minutes or longer, until soft.

Heat half the olive oil and half the butter in a large nonstick sauté pan, and add the sliced onions, three-quarters of the garlic, bay leaf, some salt, and the thyme. Regulate the heat and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until the onions are gold brown – an hour if needed.

Meanwhile, scald and peel the tomatoes, cut them in halves or quarters, and mix them in a large bowl with remaining olive oil, sprinkle with salt, and the remaining chopped garlic. Spread them on a baking sheet with edges, and roast in a hot oven (425-450 degrees), turning once or twice, until charred

spots are appearing around their edges.

Check the tomatoes every 10 minutes or so, then more frequently when they begin to color – you want them subtly charred, not burnt. When they are ready, allow them to cool a little on the pan, and then scrape them into a blender and process for a few seconds. They should be roughly chopped.

When the porcini feel soft and flexible, drain them, reserving the liquid. Rinse them carefully to get rid of all the sand and chop any large pieces. Add water if needed to make 3 cups. Wash the shiitakes, cut off stems and slice.

Melt remaining tablespoon of butter in nonstick pan, sauté all the mushrooms until shiitakes begin to color. Deglaze pan with wine, then combine mushrooms and wine with the caramelized onions in a soup pot.

Add the soaking liquid from the porcini, the vegetable broth and the tomatoes and simmer everything for about 10 minutes to marry the flavors. Taste, and correct the seasoning with salt or pepper if desired. Stir in the cream.

Makes 8-10 servings.