

Spring Tonic with Cheese Croutons

This vegetable bouillon is great served hot or cold and its bright red color lends itself well to a refreshing spring soup.

- 3 1 lb. cans of tomatoes
- 2 stalks celery with leaves
- 2 carrots, scraped
- 1 green pepper, seeded
- 1 large onion
- 3 peppercorns
- 2 whole cloves
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp basil
- ½ tsp sugar
- ¼ cup port
- 1 T fresh lemon juice

Cheese Croutons

- 2 slices of day old white bread
- 3 T butter
- 1 T grated parmesan cheese

Put the contents of the cans of tomatoes, juice and all, in a large saucepan, breaking solid chunks up with a fork. Cut the vegetables into chunks and add them to the pot. Stir in peppercorns, cloves, salt, basil and sugar. Cover the saucepan tightly and bring it to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for one hour, stirring once or twice. Cool. Strain the soup through a fine sieve or cheesecloth, squeezing all the juices out of the vegetables. Return the bouillon to the saucepan and add the port and lemon juice. Add more salt and pepper, if desired. Bring to a boil and serve, adding a few cheese croutons to each serving.



Use a firm rather than spongy type bread. Trim the crusts and cut the bread into one-quarter inch cubes. Heat the butter in a skillet until hot and bubbly, add bread cubes. Cook and toss over low heat until crisp and well browned. Drain on paper towels and then place in a small bowl. Sprinkle with cheese while still warm. *Serves 6