

Pappa al Pomodoro (Bread Soup)*

Serves 4

3 large cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
1/2-cup extra virgin olive oil (divided in half)
Pinch of dried hot pepper flakes
1-pound very ripe tomatoes, fresh or canned
1 pound Miche, Ciabatta, Pain au Levain or other Hillside bread, 4-5 days old
3 cups hot chicken or veggie broth
Salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
4-5 fresh basil leaves, torn in pieces

Place garlic in stockpot, along with 1/4-cup olive oil & the pepper flakes. Sauté very gently for 10- 12 minutes.

Cut the tomatoes into 3-4 pieces, remove seeds, & add them to the pot. Simmer for 15 minutes.

Cut the bread into small pieces & add to the pot, along with the broth, salt, black pepper & basil leaves. Stir very well & simmer for 15 minutes longer, then remove from the heat, cover, & let rest for 1-2 hours (can be served immediately, but flavors marry more thoroughly with rest time).

When ready to serve stir very well & place in individual soup bowls. At the table sprinkle 1 Tablespoon of the remaining olive oil on each serving, & grind some fresh black pepper into each bowl.

*Recipe adapted from Julia Child (upon request) and her Italy/Florence series appearances on a.m. TV in the early 1990s. The consistency of this soup is not liquid at all. Soup may be eaten lukewarm or cold, or reheated and is fine the next day. Do not add any grated cheese.

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