

Fire-Roasted Tomato Soup (for a Chilly Night)

1 C sweet onion, chopped (about one medium)
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 medium carrots, diced
3 T butter
3 (14oz) cans fire roasted tomatoes - OR 2 ½ lbs. ripe tomatoes (about three very large) core removed and diced large
1 t agave nectar or maple syrup
1 t sea salt
1½ C chicken broth, preferably homemade
½ C dry white wine
½ C heavy cream
½ C fresh basil leaves, chopped - optional

Melt 3 tablespoons of butter in a medium-sized stockpot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and carrots and cook until onion becomes translucent, about 3-4 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté another minute or two. Increase the heat, add the tomatoes, agave nectar and salt and cook, stirring constantly for about a minute, until the tomatoes begin to bubble. Add the chicken broth and wine (the alcohol from the wine will evaporate during cooking), bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover the stockpot partially with a lid and simmer for 20 minutes. Puree the soup with an immersion blender or in a blender (in batches) with the top vented, or in a food processor. Return the soup to the pot and add the cream, heat through. Serve garnished with chopped basil. Serves 6.

Roasted Red Pepper and Pine Nut Salad

4 C loosely packed spring mix with baby spinach (50/50 blend)
½ C bottled roasted red bell peppers, drained and chopped
1 ½ T toasted pine nuts
1 T crumbled feta cheese

Dressing:

2 T extra virgin olive oil
1 T red wine vinegar
2 t fresh oregano, chopped (or 1 t dried oregano)
1/8 t sea salt
1/8 t ground red or black pepper

Combine the dressing ingredients in a salad bowl and whisk well. Add the spring mix, roasted bell peppers and toss gently to coat. Sprinkle salad with pine nuts and feta. Serves 2-4.