

Charred Plum Tomato and Sweet Corn Soup with Crispy Okra Strips and a Kick

4 to 6 servings

INGREDIENTS FOR THE SOUP:

- 8 large plum tomatoes, halved
- 10 large cloves garlic (unpeeled)
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil plus more for drizzling the tomatoes
- 2 large ears yellow corn, shucked, kernels scraped, cobs cut in half and reserved (cobs can be used to make broth for this dish)
- Coarse sea salt
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 6 cups sweet corn broth
- Freshly ground white pepper
- Crispy okra strips with lime-thyme vinaigrette

DIRECTIONS FOR THE SOUP:

- Preheat the oven to 450 degrees
- Place the tomatoes, cut side up, on a parchment-lined baking sheet and place the garlic cloves in between them. Drizzle the tomatoes with olive oil. Bake for about 45 minutes, until the tomatoes have softened and are starting to char around the edges. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.
- In a small sauté pan over medium heat, combine the corn kernels, 1/4 teaspoon of sea salt, and 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sauté, stirring occasionally, until the corn is tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.
- In a medium-size saucepan over medium heat, combine the onions, the red pepper flakes, 1/4 teaspoon of sea salt, and 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes.
- Peel the garlic cloves and add them along with the tomatoes (and their juices), the remaining olive oil, 1 teaspoon of sea salt, and the broth to the saucepan with the onion mixture. Stir for 2 minutes, stirring constantly to incorporate.
- Puree the soup in batches in an upright blender or with an immersion blender. Strain through a medium mesh strainer and return back to the saucepan (don't strain the second time). Season with white pepper and salt to taste.
- Allow the soup to cool to room temperature, ladle into bowls, and garnish with a few cakes of crispy okra strips.

INGREDIENTS FOR THE SWEET CORN BROTH(about 1 and ½ quarts):

- 4 to 6 cobs from fresh sweet corn, cut or broken in half
- 9 cups water
- Coarse sea salt

Directions for the Sweet Corn Broth:

- In a medium-size saucepan over high heat, combine the cobs and the water and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, partially covered, for 45 minutes.
- Strain the broth in a colander and compost the cobs.
- Season with salt to taste and add fresh herbs of your choice if enjoying on its own.

Ingredients for Crispy Okra Strips with Lime-Thyme Vinaigrette (4-6 servings)

- 1 pound small to medium okra pods, ends cut off and quartered lengthwise
- 1/2 cup Multipurpose Coating for Dredging Foods
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 small clove garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme, minced
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse sea salt
- 8 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- white pepper

Directions for Crispy Okra Strips with Lime-Thyme Vinaigrette:

- In a large bowl, cover the okra strips with cold water, refrigerate, and soak for 15 minutes
- Transfer the strips to a colander and rinse well under cold running water for 2 to 3 minutes
- Put the strips back in the bowl, cover with water, and refrigerate for an additional 15 minutes
- Transfer the okra back to the colander, rinse well under cold running water for 2 to 3 minutes, and let drain. With paper towels or a clean kitchen towel, pat the okra strips as much as possible to dry them (they will be slightly moist)
- In a medium-size bowl, combine the okra strips with the Multipurpose Coating for Dredging Foods and toss them around to coat well
- Make the vinaigrette by combining the lime juice, vinegar, mustard, garlic, thyme, and salt in an upright blender. Blend while slowly pouring in the olive oil. Add white pepper to taste
- In a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat, warm the vinaigrette, just until it starts to bubble. Pour in the okra mixture and let it cook for 4 to 5 minutes, until it begins to brown (the pieces will start forming cakes). With a wooden spatula, turn over the pieces and cook for another 4 to 5 minutes, until browning and crisp
- Transfer the okra to a paper towel-lined baking sheet to drain. Then arrange on a platter and serve hot

Ingredients for Multipurpose Coating for Dredging Foods (2 cups):

- 1/2 cup whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 teaspoon fine sea salt

- 2 teaspoons freshly ground white pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne

Directions for Multipurpose Coating for Dredging Foods:

- In a large resealable plastic bag, combine the flour, cornmeal, salt, pepper, and cayenne
- Shake well to blend

Vegan Soul Kitchen by Bryant Terry: pages 83, 78, 46, and 167