



Gazpacho with Marinated Tofu and Zucchini Cream

Spain

4 ounces firm tofu
1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
2 Tablespoons apple cider vinegar
1 Tablespoon Umeboshi vinegar
6 basil leaves
1/3 cup grapeseed, olive, or nut oil
2 lbs. 4 ounces fresh tomatoes, diced
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/2 teaspoon Guar Gum
1 medium zucchini
1/4 teaspoon salt, divided, as needed
6 large leaves or 2 Tablespoons small mint leaves
1 Tablespoon olive oil
1/8 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes or as desired
Small or snipped basil leaves for garnish

Prepare marinated tofu about 2 weeks before using in recipe;
Sterilize large canning jar boiling for 15 minutes; then let it dry on clean cloth.

Cut tofu into small cubes; put in the jar. Add basil, apple cider vinegar, and Umeboshi vinegar. Cover; shake, and chill in refrigerator.* Shake jar frequently for 2 weeks.

Prepare the basil oil: Cut fresh basil finely, place in small container; cover with oil. Mash lightly to extract the basil flavor into the oil. Set aside.

Prepare the gazpacho tomatoes: Place tomato chunks in food processor with 1/4 teaspoon salt and 2 Tablespoons olive oil. Blend to puree mixture. Strain tomatoes with fine strainer over large bowl. Discard seeds and tomato skins. Add guar gum to thicken the sauce. Whisk again after a few seconds; chill until serving.

Prepare the zucchini cream: Blanch chopped zucchini for about 3 minutes in boiling water. Drain; place in ice water with salt to preserve the color. In food processor or using hand blender, puree well drained zucchini, mint leaves, salt, and 1 Tablespoon oil until creamy bright green consistency. Season with black pepper.

Serve chilled tomato gazpacho in shallow bowls; top with large dots of zucchini cream and small dots of basil oil. Arrange drained marinated tofu chunks around gazpacho. Garnish the top of soup with red pepper flakes and small basil leaves.

Yield: about 2 servings

Cook's Note: The tofu turns into a slightly different texture, aroma, and pickled acidity. The original recipe didn't refrigerate the tofu but I felt more comfortable having it under refrigeration. Feel free to increase or decrease flavorings and amounts. Gar gum is a thickening agent that can be purchased at an organic market. Umeboshi plum vinegar is the brine that remains after Japanese "nanko" plums are layered with sea salt and red shiso leaves in barrels and allowed to pickle for a year. My bottle was from Eden Foods. It can be found in a natural food store or Asian ingredient aisle in some upscale supermarkets.

About the Recipe: The gazpacho has a delightful blend of flavors: light tomato broth, minted zucchini cream, zesty flavor of basil oil, touch of spicy pepper flakes, and invigorating plum vinegar tofu bits. It's very light and refreshing. You might want to double the amount of tomato base for that second helping. This is a very gourmet style of gazpacho.

About the Cuisine and Country: Gazpacho is a cold soup usually made with a tomato base and uses an assortment of raw vegetables. It originated in the southern Spanish region of Andalusia. Being so refreshing and cool, it is very popular in Spain and its neighbor Portugal during the summer months. Spain is known for its rich

cultural and culinary heritage that produces a variety of high quality products. It's easy to see why their theme is "The Language of Taste."