Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 35 minutes
Total Time: 45 minutes
Servings: 4–6
Calories: ~280 kcal per serving

Table of Contents

- Why You'll Love This Soup
- Ingredients
  - For the Soup Base
  - For the Creamy Finish
- Equipment Needed
- Instructions
  - Phase 1: Prep & Sauté (Time: 10 mins | Intensity: Low)
  - Phase 2: Build the Base (Time: 8 mins | Intensity: Medium)
  - Phase 3: Blend to Silky Smoothness (Time: 5 mins | Intensity: Medium-High)
  - Phase 4: The Creamy Finish (Time: 4 mins | Intensity: Low)
- Intensity & Timing Guide (At a Glance)
- Recipe Notes & Tips
- Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Why You'll Love This Soup

There is something deeply comforting about a bowl of velvety, creamy tomato soup. It is the kind of dish that warms you from the inside out on a cold day, pairs perfectly with a grilled cheese sandwich, and somehow tastes even better the next day. This recipe skips the canned soup shortcut and builds real depth of flavor from roasted aromatics, fire-roasted tomatoes, and a touch of cream. The result is a silky, rich soup with a beautiful balance of

sweetness, acidity, and herbaceousness. It is simple enough for a weeknight but elegant enough to serve at a dinner party.

Ingredients

For the Soup Base

- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (or olive oil for a dairy-free base)
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 cans (28 oz each) whole peeled tomatoes (San Marzano preferred) or crushed tomatoes
- 3 cups vegetable or chicken broth (low sodium)
- 1 tsp granulated sugar (to balance acidity)

- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp red pepper flakes (optional, for gentle heat)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

For the Creamy Finish

- 1/2 cup heavy cream (or full-fat coconut milk for dairy-free)
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped (plus extra for garnish)
- 2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated (optional, for serving)
- Croutons or crusty bread for serving

Equipment Needed

- Large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven
- Immersion blender (or countertop blender, working in batches)
- Wooden spoon
- Ladle
- Cutting board and chef’s knife

Instructions

Phase 1: Prep & Sauté (Time: 10 mins | Intensity: Low)

1. Prep the Vegetables: Dice the onion and carrots into roughly even pieces so they cook at the same rate. Mince the garlic and chop the fresh herbs.
2. Melt the Butter: In a large heavy-bottomed pot, melt the butter over medium heat until it foams.
3. Sweat the Aromatics: Add the diced onion and carrots. Sauté for 6–8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the onions are translucent and the carrots have begun to soften. Do

not let them brown—you want sweetness, not char.

4. Add Garlic & Tomato Paste: Stir in the minced garlic and tomato paste. Cook for 1–2 minutes until the garlic is fragrant and the tomato paste has darkened slightly. This step concentrates the flavor.

Phase 2: Build the Base (Time: 8 mins | Intensity: Medium)

1. Deglaze: Pour in about 1/2 cup of the broth and scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pot with your wooden spoon. This is where the flavor lives.

2. Add Tomatoes & Seasoning: Add the canned tomatoes (with their juices), the remaining broth, sugar, oregano, thyme, smoked paprika, and red pepper flakes. Stir well and season lightly with salt and pepper.

3. Simmer: Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low. Cover partially and simmer for 15–20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the carrots are completely tender and the flavors have melded.

Phase 3: Blend to Silky Smoothness (Time: 5 mins | Intensity: Medium-High)

1. Remove from Heat: Take the pot off the burner. If using an immersion blender, blend directly in the pot until completely smooth, about 2–3 minutes. If using a countertop blender, allow the soup to cool slightly, then blend in batches (never fill the blender more than halfway with hot liquid) and return to the pot.

2. Strain (Optional): For an ultra-silky texture, pass the blended soup through a fine-mesh sieve. This step is optional but takes the soup from rustic to restaurant-quality.

Phase 4: The Creamy Finish (Time: 4 mins | Intensity: Low)

1. Add Cream: Return the pot to low heat. Stir in the heavy cream and chopped basil. Warm gently for 3–4 minutes—do not let it boil vigorously after the cream is added, or it may split.

2. Adjust Seasoning: Taste and adjust salt, pepper, and sugar. A pinch of sugar can rescue a soup that tastes too acidic; a squeeze of lemon can brighten one that tastes flat.

3. Serve: Ladle into warm bowls. Garnish with fresh basil, parsley, a swirl of cream, and a sprinkle of Parmesan. Serve with croutons or crusty bread for dipping.

Intensity & Timing Guide (At a Glance)

Phase	Task	Time	Intensity Level
Prep	Chopping vegetables & herbs	10 mins	Low (Relaxed)
Sauté	Sweating onions & carrots	8 mins	Medium (Stirring occasionally)
Simmer	Building flavor	18 mins	Low (Hands-off, occasional stir)
Blend	Smoothing the soup	5 mins	High (Careful with hot liquid)
Finish	Adding cream & serving	4 mins	Low (Gentle warmth)

Recipe Notes & Tips

- Tomato Choice: San Marzano whole peeled tomatoes are sweeter and less acidic than other varieties. If you can find them, use them. If not, crushed tomatoes work beautifully and save you a blending step.

- Roasted Tomato Variation: For an even deeper flavor, roast the canned tomatoes (drained) on a sheet pan at 425°F (220°C) for 20 minutes before adding them to the pot.

- Dairy-Free Version: Substitute olive oil for butter and full-fat coconut milk for heavy cream. The coconut flavor is subtle and complements the tomatoes nicely.

- Make It a Meal: Add a can of drained cannellini beans during the simmer for extra protein and fiber, or stir in some cooked orzo for a heartier soup.

- Storage: Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days, or freeze (without the cream) for up to 3 months. Add cream after reheating.

- Grilled Cheese Pairing: A classic sharp cheddar grilled cheese on sourdough is the canonical companion. For a lighter option, serve with a crisp green salad and a hunk of warm bread.

Nutrition Facts (Estimated)

Based on 4 servings (with heavy cream and Parmesan). Nutritional values are estimates and will vary based on specific ingredients used.

- Calories: 282 kcal
- Total Fat: 17g (Saturated Fat: 9g)
- Cholesterol: 48mg
- Sodium: 610mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 26g (Dietary Fiber: 6g, Sugars: 14g)
- Protein: 8g
- Vitamin A: 95% DV
- Vitamin C: 40% DV
- Calcium: 12% DV
- Iron: 15% DV