



## Creamy Parmesan Tuscan Soup

IN MY 20-PLUS YEARS of recipe creation, this is one of our favorite meals. Creamy Parmesan Tuscan Soup boasts rich flavors and creamy textures, making it perfect for weeknight family dinners, special occasions, or entertaining.

The soup is filled with simple ingredients like fire-roasted tomatoes, cannellini beans, and fresh spinach, which are elevated by a comforting blend of heavy cream and Parmigiano Reggiano.

This one-pot meal is ideal for the cooler days of autumn. Most rustic Tuscan recipes rely on fresh, locally available ingredients, making this recipe highly adaptable. Feel free to adjust proportions and add or remove any ingredient to your liking. Get creative by adding seasonal vegetables. For an extra boost of hearty protein, you can add pieces of roasted chicken or cooked pork sausage just before serving. Here are some notes on the ingredients.

**Fire-Roasted Tomatoes:** Use these to add a smoky depth to the soup.

**Parmigiano Reggiano:** Always look for the best quality. Not all Parmesan cheeses are equal. Please, never buy grated Parmesan cheese. It has a very short shelf life. It often contains additives to keep it from clumping, and it just doesn't have the vibrant flavor of freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano.

**Parmesan Rind:** A secret weapon for flavor. Use the last quarter inch of your piece of Parmesan or ask the cheese monger at your local market to cut you a piece. Don't skip this step, it adds a rich umami layer.

**Cannellini Beans:** Cannellini beans and butter beans are known for their creamy texture. They are the heart of this soup.

**Leftovers:** Make extra, as this soup is even better on day two. U



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### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 1 sweet onion, diced
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- Kosher salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 Tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 t. dried basil
- ½ tsp. dried oregano
- ¼ tsp. dried thyme
- 2 (14-ounce cans) fire-roasted tomatoes
- 1/2 cup, red pepper pesto or roasted red peppers, chopped finely.
- 6-8 chopped sun-dried tomatoes.
- 2 (14-ounce cans) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 (14-ounce cans) cans of butter beans
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 -2 Parmesan rinds
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese, plus more for topping
- 8 ounces fresh chopped spinach. Add more/less to your liking.
- Crushed red pepper, for topping
- Crusty bread for serving.

### METHOD:

Heat the olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven, over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic with a pinch of salt and pepper. Cook, stirring often, until the onions soften, for about 5 minutes.

Stir in the tomato paste, basil, oregano, and thyme. Continue to cook for 5 more minutes, stirring often, until the tomato paste darkens.

Add the tomatoes, beans, red pepper, sun-dried tomatoes, stock, and Parmesan rind. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes, covering for the last 10 minutes.

Remove the lid, reduce the heat to low, and stir in the cream. Stir in the Parmesan cheese and spinach. Cook for 15 to 20 more minutes, stirring often, until the cheese melts and the spinach wilts. Season with additional salt and pepper. Serve hot, topped with extra Parmesan cheese and crushed red pepper.

## Pro Tip: Homemade Croutons

In place of plain bread, this soup is delicious with homemade croutons. Once you've made these, you'll never buy boxed croutons again.

Tear a whole loaf of Tuscan bread or crusty sourdough into bite-size pieces. Spread out on a cookie sheet and sprinkle with olive oil, tossing until they're coated (damp, not saturated). Sprinkle with flake salt. Note: tearing the bread gives it more nooks and crannies for the soup to cling to.

Put them under the broiler, watching them very closely until they start to turn toasty brown. Take them out, toss, and return to the broiler until all sides are light toasty brown. Serve them as garnish with the soup.



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