

Tomato-Thyme Sorbet

Recipe 172 of 365

Oh, I know what you're saying: *I don't habitually serve intermezzos, and I've never made sorbet.* Those are horrible excuses. Well, not *good* excuses, anyway. With the help of a blender and an ice cream maker, sorbet is about as difficult as making a smoothie, and even though you probably don't serve dinner in courses—I certainly don't—planning for a palate cleanser between two items can turn having friends over for a chill dinner into a fancy dinner party. *I hate fancy dinner parties,* you say. Well, in that case, I can't help you.

For best flavor, use the very best tomatoes you can find, preferably a variety with lots of meat and few seeds. (If you're shopping at a regular grocery store, look for Ugli heirlooms.) The number of tomatoes you need will depend on the type of tomato you use – I used 3 big heirloom tomatoes, two Black Krimms and a Mortgage Lifter.

Note that you'll need to start this recipe the day before you plan to serve the sorbet.

TIME: 30 minutes active time

MAKES: about 4 cups sorbet

1 cup sugar

1 cup water

1/2 cup (packed) roughly chopped fresh thyme

3 large, ripe heirloom tomatoes

Pinch salt

Combine the sugar, water, and thyme in a small saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Simmer for 2 minutes, remove from the heat, and let cool to room temperature. When cool, strain with a fine-mesh strainer.

Meanwhile, blanch and peel the tomatoes: put a kettle of water on to boil. Use a small, sharp knife to score the bottom of each tomato with an "x." Place the tomatoes in a large heatproof bowl, and pour the boiling water over the tomatoes. Let sit for 30 seconds to 1 minute, or until the skin begins to peel back on the tomatoes. Drain the tomatoes, peel away all skin, remove the core and all seeds, and chop. Save 2 1/4 cups of the chopped tomatoes for the sorbet; use any remaining tomatoes for something else.

Combine 1 cup of the cooled thyme syrup with the 2 1/4 cups chopped tomato meat and the salt in a blender or food processor, and process until completely smooth. Refrigerate until cold (overnight is easiest, I think, but to rush the process, you can chill it in the freezer, stirring frequently).

The next day, freeze the mixture in an ice cream maker according to the manufacturer's instructions. Allow the sorbet to harden in the freezer for a few hours before serving.