

Cooking with the Club

by Chef Robert Larios



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For a Rainy Day

Kay's Red Pepper Tomato Basil Soup and Grilled Cheese Sandwich

DIRECTIONS:



As always, gather your ingredients.



Mince the garlic and dice the red onion. Slice the sharp cheddar and havarti cheeses as you see here.



Place a saucepan on medium heat, and add extra virgin olive oil. Then add minced garlic and diced red onion to hot pan. Add sea salt and pepper. Stir for about five minutes. Then add the tomato and roasted red pepper soup to pan. Add the dried basil, dill and parsley. Stir occasionally.



Take a cast iron skillet and coat it with non-stick spray. Spread butter on one side of the bread slices and place on the hot iron skillet. Medium will be sufficient. Let grill until golden brown as shown.



Then place sharp cheddar and havarti cheeses on bread and place the other bread on top with buttered sides touching the cheese. That means that the unbuttered sides are on the outside. Turn cheese sandwich over after about three minutes.

One of the most memorable days for me growing up as a very young boy was a rainy Saturday morning. My mom was in the kitchen making breakfast for me, and while I waited for Mom to make pancakes, eggs and bacon, I remember enjoying the sounds of rain while watching morning 'toons on the television. That was comfort. And today I bring out a little bit of my feelings of comfort with this special comfort food recipe.



Comfort foods should be quick to make but leave you wanting more. And this one does just that and more. Try it on a rainy day – as I write this, we're in the middle of a deluge! – and you will know what I mean. If you don't like sharp cheddar or can't find havarti, you are free to use any favorite cheese that is easy to melt. You don't have to use both cheeses, either; one or the other will work, too. You don't even have to use tomato and roasted red pepper soup, it can just be regular tomato soup; of course, nothing store bought can compare to homemade. I prefer soup from the carton, instead of the can, and I prefer tomato soup that is low in sodium with roasted red peppers.

Red Pepper Tomato Basil Soup & Grilled Cheese Sandwich

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 slices bread
- 2 tablespoons dry parsley
- 1 tablespoon dry basil
- Dash of dill
- 1 clove garlic
- 1/4 cup red onion
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

SERVES 1 TO 2

- 2 slices sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 slices havarti cheese
- 2 to 4 ounces butter
- 1 cup of tomato and roasted red pepper soup



Cooking TIDBIT:

Dry herbs like dry basil and parsley should be used plentifully and make sure to rub and break them up to release the flavors. When using fresh herbs, use less of it because the flavors are strong.

[A Cook's Dictionary]

Havarti cheese:

Named after the Danish experimental farm where it was developed, Havarti is often referred to as the Danish Tilsit because of its similarity to that cheese. It's semisoft and pale yellow with small irregular holes. The flavor of young havarti is mild yet tangy. As the cheese ages, its flavor intensifies and sharpens. Havarti comes in loaves or blocks and is often wrapped in foil.

– From the *The New Food Lover's Companion*,
Sharon Tyler Herbst, 1995, Barron's Educational Series.



Once cheeses have melted, cut in half. Take a bowl and place soup in it. Plate as you see here. Enjoy!



Food Factoid:

"A fine soup may be judged with just one spoonful, but it's better to be thoroughly sure." – a variation to an old Czech proverb