

All Classical

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Host Suzanne Nance loves to explore Oregon's foodie culture, and what better way than to go straight to the chefs of some of our most beloved restaurants!

Together, Suzanne and the culinary artists of the City of Roses (and beyond!) will explore music through the idea of comfort food, provide recipes, and chat about the joy of cooking, all paired with lush, beautifully crafted music.

On this week's episode, chef Ben Stenn, of Celilo Restaurant and Bar in Hood River, shares his recipe for Gazpacho, a bright and fresh summer soup, the perfect starter to any meal when it's hot. Enjoy!

Gazpacho by Ben Stenn

It's tomato season which is a favorite time of year for us at Celilo Restaurant. The tomato, better than any other farm fresh ingredient, illustrates the importance of local sourced vegetables and fruits. Tomatoes, when properly ripened, are extremely fragile. A tomato that can survive transport, storage and handling over many days must, by necessity, be picked when it is still firm. If it ripens on the vine, it's juicy and packed full of flavor, it has a short life and must be handled with care. That's how we love our tomatoes and why we only offer them for the brief period of time when they can arrive to us at their best.

Well, a byproduct of having beautiful, ripe tomatoes is that some of them will get to be too soft for slicing before we can use them up. These "over ripe" tomatoes are perfect for gazpacho. They have incredible sweetness, and because they are going to be pureed, they don't need to look perfect.



For the recipe

- 4 large ripe tomatoes
- 1/4 red onion
- 2 sweet peppers (can be spicy, depends on your taste)
- 1 cucumber
- 2 TBS rice vinegar or other lighter vinegar
- salt and pepper, to taste
- fresh basil leaves for decoration (or mint, parsley, or other favorite herb)

Method

In a large mixing bowl, add together: cut tomatoes, chopped onion, chopped peppers (cut off tops and remove seeds and pith) chopped cucumber (peel and seed), vinegar, and about 1 tsp salt and 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper (more or less, to taste).

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Stir ingredients together and let sit for 1-2 hours in the refrigerator.

Puree all in a blender at high speed. Check seasoning, it may need more salt or a splash of vinegar. Pour through a mesh strainer to remove any seeds or skins. Divide into chilled bowls or cups and decorate with fresh herbs. Yum!

Ben Stenn

Chef and Managing Partner, Celilo Restaurant and Bar

Ben Stenn graduated from NYU in 1992 with a BA in political science and a minor in French Literature. As it happens, the minor degree had more influence than the political science (thank goodness) as it got Ben to France where he found his *raison d'être*. Ben spent two years in France, first at La Varenne, Ecole de Cuisine and then at several restaurants that rounded out his early learning. He returned to New York City and the restaurant world before coming to the Pacific Northwest.

After arriving in Hood River in 1995, Ben operated the Sixth Street Bistro and Loft for ten years. This offered Ben the opportunity to establish a family of producers and food people, the foundation of Celilo.

Ben's simple philosophy is *"Know your food. Know what it is, where it comes from, who grew it, when it was harvested, how it was prepared. It is an honor to be a part of this simple ethic."*



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Learn more at:
www.celilorestaurant.com



*Images:
Blaine Franger Photography (exterior)
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