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Roasted Tomato Basil Soup (Serves 6 to 8)

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Photo: Melanie Acevedo

3 pounds ripe plum tomatoes, cut in half
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons good olive oil
1 tablespoon kosher salt
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
2 cups chopped yellow onions (2 onions)
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
1 (28-ounce) canned plum tomatoes, with their juice
4 cups fresh basil leaves, packed
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1 quart chicken stock or water

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Toss together the tomatoes, 1/4 cup olive oil, salt, and pepper. the tomatoes in one layer on a baking sheet and roast for 45 minutes.

In an 8-quart stockpot over medium heat, sauté the onions and garlic with 2 tablespoons of olive oil, the butter, and red pepper flakes for 1 minutes, until the onions start to brown. Add the canned tomatoes, basil, thyme, and chicken stock. Add the oven-roasted tomatoes, including liquid on the baking sheet. Bring to a boil and simmer uncovered for 40 minutes. Pass through a food mill fitted with the coarsest blade. Taste seasonings. Serve hot or cold.

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