



# Tomato Theme

This complex dish from Le Manoir is made up of five separately simple elements, which can be served in their own right as a home-style dish.

This tomato theme was born from me enjoying Maman Blanc's tomato salad as a boy and moping up the juices around the plate. That was the essence of the tomato, this dish is the ultimate tomato experience.

SERVES (YIELD): 4  
DIFFICULTY RATING: ●●●  
PREPARATION TIME: 2 DAYS  
COOKING TIME: N/A

#### SPECIAL EQUIPMENT:

Blender & sorbetiere (or ice cream maker), ice cube tray

#### PLANNING AHEAD:

The essence jelly should be made one day in advance to allow the gelatine to completely set. The granite should be frozen overnight. The sorbet can be prepared half a day in advance and churned in the sorbetière (or ice cream maker) one hour before serving. Place four plates & four frosted sake glasses in the freezer one hour before the meal.

#### INGREDIENTS

##### For the jelly

200ml/7fl oz tomato essence  
½ bronze gelatine leaf, soaked in cold water until softened, drained  
1 red pepper, peeled, seeds removed, cut into 1cm squares  
4 tomatoes (one each and preferably Green Zebra, Yellow Butterfly, Black Russian and Caro Rich), cut into small wedges  
1 small handful fresh baby herb tops and flowers, plus extra for garnish  
1 pinch cayenne pepper

##### For the sorbet

500ml tomato essence  
50g caster sugar  
4 large fresh basil leaves

##### For the tomato & mozzarella salad

4 heritage tomatoes, cores removed, cut into different shapes  
1 small shallot, finely sliced  
1 small fresh basil leaf, torn  
1 tsp extra virgin olive oil  
½ tsp white wine vinegar  
1 small pinch sea salt  
1 small pinch black pepper  
1 head Little Gem lettuce, cut in half, leaves separated  
80g/3oz buffalo mozzarella, roughly torn into small pieces

#### METHOD

##### For the jelly

- 1 For the jelly, lightly oil an empty ice cube tray.
- 2 Place two tablespoons of the tomato essence into a small non-reactive pan set over a low heat. Add the drained gelatine leaf and stir until dissolved. Pour the gelatine mixture back into the remaining tomato essence and stir well.
- 3 Pour a thin layer (about 2-3mm thick) of the essence into the bottoms of the ice cube trays and chill in the fridge for ten minutes, or until the jelly starts to thicken slightly.
- 4 Cut the pips from the wedges of tomato carefully. (Discard the flesh or use in another recipe.) Carefully dot the tomato pips on top of the slightly set jelly along with the red pepper cubes, baby herbs and flowers. Spoon over the remaining jelly until the ice cube tray is full. Place into the fridge to set overnight.

##### For the sorbet

- 1 Place two tablespoons of the tomato essence into a small non-reactive pan set over a low heat. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved. Set aside to cool, then pour the mixture back into the remaining tomato essence.
- 2 Pour the mixture into a sorbetière or ice cream maker and churn for 6-10 minutes to a sorbet consistency. (Once churned, the sorbet must be served within 2-3 hours; due to its low sugar content, it will soon crystallize and harden.)
- 3 Using two warmed spoons, shape the tomato sorbet into four quenelles and place onto a frozen tray. Keep in the freezer until ready to serve.

##### For the tomato & mozzarella salad

- 1 In a large bowl mix together all the ingredients for marinating the tomatoes and leave for one hour.
- 2 Place the marinated tomatoes on the gem lettuce leaf, and finish with the olives, torn pieces of mozzarella and your best olive oil.

##### For the essence cup

- 1 Just before serving, fill the chilled sake glasses with the tomato essence.

##### For the granite

- 1 Place the tomato essence in a shallow, rectangular container and freeze overnight.

## TOMATO THEME P2

### For the essence cup

320ml/11fl oz tomato essence, chilled  
4 sake glasses, chilled

### For the granite

200ml/7fl oz tomato essence  
1 large tomato, quartered, pips and skin removed

### To serve

- 1** Place a chilled tomato essence cup in the centre of each of four large long plates.
- 2** Carefully turn the tomato jelly out of the ice cube tray and place one jelly cube on one side of the cup.
- 3** Place a small Little Gem leaf to the other side of the sake glass and top with some of the tomato salad, dotting with pieces of mozzarella.
- 4** Place a tomato quarter at one end of the plate and, using a fork, scrape the frozen granite until you have a spoonful of crystals, and place this on top of the tomato quarter.
- 5** Place a basil leaf at the other end of the plate and top with a quenelle of sorbet.
- 6** Garnish the plate with the reserved tomato flesh and extra baby herb tops and flowers.

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