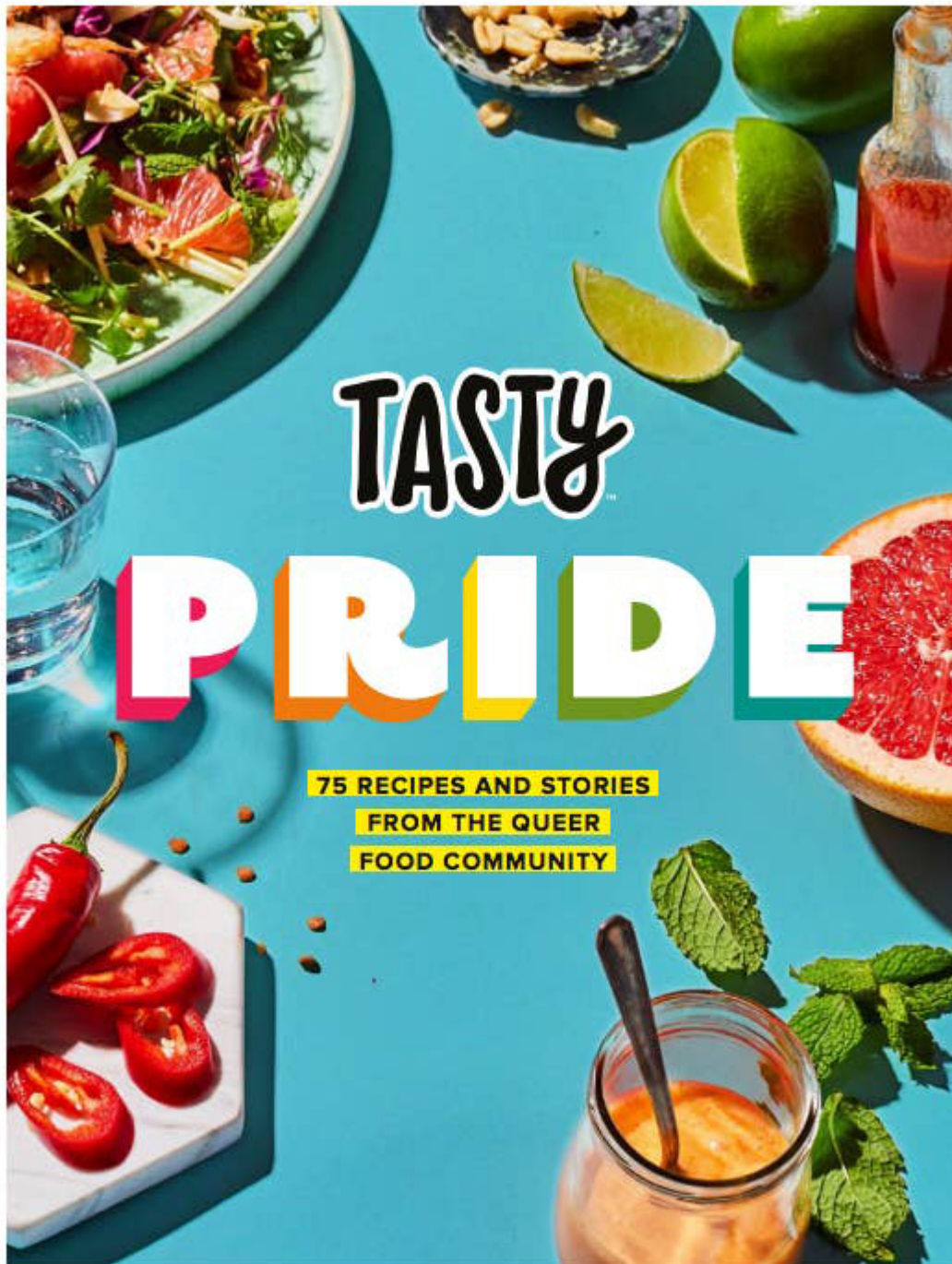


SEASONAL BEET BORSCHT

June 29, 2020



By Liz Alpern

Soup is my ultimate comfort food. As a kid, I was eager to bring a thermos of hot soup to school for my lunch—a little reminder of home. As an adult, I cook gallons of soup

frequently, to feed the crowds at my fundraising party, Queer Soup Night; and we regularly serve soup at events hosted by my company, The Gefilteria.

So when a fellow chef friend approached me about a cookbook he was putting together that features queer chefs from across the country, it was a no-brainer to contribute a soup recipe, as a way to showcase my favorite food and highlight my professional passion for Ashkenazi Jewish cooking. Served hot or cold, it must be mentioned that this beet borscht is a fabulous way to spotlight the incredible produce at the Coop! The sweetness of seasonal beets and carrots, the crunch of organic celery, and the aroma of onions and garlic will fill your kitchen with warmth and love.

Excerpted from *Tasty Pride: 75 Recipes and Stories from the Queer Food Community* by Jesse Szewczyk, published by BuzzFeed Tasty and Penguin Random House (2020).

SERVES 8

- 4 medium tomatoes
- 3 tbsp. olive oil, butter, or schmaltz (rendered chicken fat)
- 2 medium yellow onions, sliced
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 1½ lbs. red beets, peeled and chopped (about 3¾ cups)
- 8 cups chicken, vegetable, or beef broth
- 3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 dried bay leaves
- 2 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 tbsp. caraway seeds
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- kosher salt
- sour cream, minced fresh chives, and chopped fresh dill

Note: Prepare this borscht a day ahead if possible, since this soup, like most others,

will taste even better the next day.

1. Bring a small pot of water to a boil. Prepare an ice bath in a medium bowl.
2. Score the bottoms of the tomatoes with an X, then add to the boiling water and cook for about 60 seconds, until the skins start to curl. Transfer the tomatoes to the ice bath. Once cool enough to handle, peel and chop the tomatoes, discarding the skins and seeds.
3. In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. When the oil is shimmering, add the onions and cook until golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add the carrots, celery, and beets and continue to cook until the vegetables have softened, another 10 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes and broth, using a wooden spoon to scrape up any bits stuck to the bottom of the pan. Bring to a boil.
4. While the soup is coming to a boil, gather the garlic, bay leaves, black peppercorns, and caraway seeds in a square of cheesecloth and tie into a bundle with kitchen twine.
5. Drop the cheesecloth bundle into the soup, then reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer for about 1 hour, until the vegetables are fork-tender.
6. Remove the pot from the heat. Remove and discard the spice bundle. Purée the soup with an immersion blender to your desired consistency. Add the vinegar, 1 tablespoon at a time, and stir to combine. Season to taste with salt.
7. Ladle the soup into bowls. Serve with a generous dollop of sour cream and a sprinkling of chives and dill.

Recipe originally inspired by *The Gefilte Manifesto: New Recipes for Old World Jewish Foods* by Jeffrey Yoskowitz and Liz Alpern (Flatiron Books, 2016).