

# Divvy Up Dining

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## Cucumber Avocado Gazpacho

I am in the Berkshires this week visiting my family. For those who haven't been, the Berkshires are an area in Western Mass stretching from the CT border up to Williamstown, home of Williams College. It's filled with New England towns, farms, lakes, antique shops, good restaurants, and cultural attractions like Tanglewood, the Norman Rockwell Museum, and Shakespeare Theater.

On Wednesday, my mom and I drove up to Lenox to visit some of the boutiques and have lunch. We went to the **Patisserie Lenox**, a place she had visited before for its great coffee and pastries. They also serve lunch and we decided to share a spinach croissant and salad. On a whim, I suggested we order the cucumber avocado gazpacho. I'm not ordinarily a gazpacho fan -- it used to remind me too much of V-8 juice - but I was hot, thirsty and the infusion of vegetables sounded good. And after trying this recipe, I'm a convert.

The Patisserie is owned by a husband and wife, **Jean Yves and Yulia**.

She does the cooking and tea selection, and he makes the pastries. Yulia generously shared her gazpacho recipe with us. She didn't follow any particular recipe but used her tastebuds as a guide, adding and tweaking to achieve the right balance. The addition of the avocado gave the soup the right amount of creaminess and depth to balance the tart, raw flavors of the cucumber and tomato. The herbs helped keep the flavor interesting. I also bought a **raspberry brioche** for Noah, but unfortunately only a third of it made its way home. I had to reframe the gift: instead of buying him a brioche, I "saved him a third of my brioche".

I made the soup this morning and as we enter the first day of a heat wave, I'm thankful to have several cold meals sitting in the refrigerator.

### INGREDIENTS

- 6 pounds tomatoes
- 2 pounds cucumbers
- 2 avocados
- 2 lemons
- 1 bunch of parsley
- 1 bunch of oregano
- salt
- pepper

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Core the tomatoes and place them in the boiling water for about 30 seconds. Scoop them out of the water and once they are cool enough, remove the skins. They should come right off.
2. Cut off the ends of the cucumbers and if you want, peel them. I peeled about half of each cucumber, to leave some texture.
3. Chop 1 1/2 cups of tomatoes and 1 1/2 cups of cucumbers and set aside.
4. Wash and chop the herbs.
5. Add the tomatoes, cucumbers, avocado, and herbs to a food processor machine and blend. You want everything well mixed but leave some flecks of various vegetables and herbs.
6. Remove from the blender and season with the juice of 1-2 lemons, salt and pepper to taste. Add in the remaining chopped tomatoes and cucumbers.

