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Hot Tomatoes
Sheila Lukins, Celebrate, Workman Publishing, 2003

12 cloves of garlic
5 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
8 ripe tomatoes, still connected on the vine
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
8 crottins de chèvre (goat cheese rounds)
2 cups fresh mint leaves
Juice of 2 lemons
12 to 16 slices peasant bread, toasted

Position a rack in the center of the oven and preheat the oven to 350° F.

Place the garlic cloves on a piece of aluminum foil and drizzle 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over them. Close the foil, forming a sealed packet, and place it in a small ovenproof dish. Bake to soften lightly, 10 minutes. Remove the packet from the oven and set it aside. Raise the oven temperature to 400°F.

Carefully arrange the tomatoes (still on the vine) in an oven-to-table baking dish. Season them generously with salt and pepper. Arrange the garlic cloves around the tomatoes. Drizzle with 3 tablespoons of the olive oil, and bake until the tomatoes are softened and runny, 25 minutes.

Arrange the crottins around the tomatoes, and return the dish to the oven. Bake until the cheese softens, another 5 minutes. Watch carefully – you don't want them to melt.

Meanwhile, coarsely tear the mint leaves and place them in a bowl. Sprinkle with the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil and the lemon juice.

To serve, pass the dish of tomatoes and cheese. Everybody helps themselves to a tomato and cheese and plenty of the sauce. Spread the cheese and tomato on the toasts and pass the mint salad to scoop on top or eat on the side.