

## Baked Tomatoes With Crusty Bread

Gourmet | January 2008

The brown sugar in the ingredients list below is there to mellow the acidity of the tomatoes, not to make this a sweet dish. Use a sturdy bakery loaf of white sandwich bread, not the packaged sliced stuff, for the topping. You will get enormous pleasure from serving people this dish.

Makes 8 (side dish) servings

Edna Lewis

### ingredients

3 (28-ounce) cans whole tomatoes in juice  
3/4 stick unsalted butter, divided  
2 medium onions, chopped  
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/8 teaspoon ground cloves  
1 teaspoon dried thyme  
1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar, or to taste  
8 (1/4-inch-thick) slices good-quality white sandwich bread such as a pullman loaf

### preparation

Preheat oven to 425°F with rack in middle. Butter a 3-quart baking dish (about 13 by 9 by 2 inches).

Drain tomatoes, reserving 1 cup juice, then chop.

Heat 2 tablespoons butter in a 5- to 6-quart heavy pot over medium-high heat until foam subsides, then cook onions with 1/2 teaspoon salt, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, allspice, and cloves and cook, stirring, 1 minute.

Stir in tomatoes with reserved juice, thyme, brown sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon pepper and briskly simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until thickened, about 20 minutes.

Meanwhile, melt remaining 1/2 stick butter and brush onto both sides of bread. Halve each slice.

Transfer tomato mixture to baking dish and top with bread, overlapping slightly. Bake until bubbling and bread is crisp and golden-brown, about 20 minutes.