

Creamy Soups

- Chilled Pear Soup
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- Cream of Asparagus Soup
- Broccoli Cheddar Soup
- Thai Coconut Soup

Chilled Pear Soup

Source: *Splendid Soups, James Peterson*

Ingredients

9 sweet ripe pears
1 quart light chicken broth
1 medium-sized onion, chopped
2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tbsp curry powder, preferably Garam Masala
1 cup heavy cream
salt
cayenne pepper
1/2 cup heavy cream, beaten until barely stiff

Directions

Rinse the pears slice them in half lengthwise and remove the cores with a spoon or melon baller. There is no need to peel the pears since the peels will be strained anyway. Slice each pear in half into several pieces. Put the sliced pears in a mixing bowl with the chicken broth (The broth covers the pears and prevents them from turning brown.

In a 4 quart pot over medium heat, cook the chopped onion in butter until it softens and turns translucent, about 10 minutes. Stir in the curry powder and cook for about 2 minutes until the smell starts to fill the room

Pour in the pears and all the remaining chicken broth. Simmer the soup for about 15 minutes, until the pears are soft. If the pears are under ripe, you may need to simmer them longer.

Strain the soup through a food mill with the finest disk or puree the pears in a food processor or blender and strain through a medium-mesh strainer.

Chill the soup and 1 cup heavy cream (See note.) Season the soup to taste with salt and cayenne pepper. Decorate each bowl with a swirl of lightly beaten cream.

Note: If you plan to store the soup overnight, bring the cream to a simmer before adding it to the soup. This sterilizes it and prevents it from souring. The cream can also be added the next day shortly before serving.

(This soups also works with apples. You can add chopped cilantro to this soup just before chilling to accentuate the flavor of the curry.)

(Another variation is with watercress: Prepare the soup as normal, but leave out curry. Take the leaves and small stems off of 2 bunches watercress and boil for 1 minute in a pot of boiling salted water. Strain, rinse with cold water, and combine with a cup of the soup in a blender. Blend at high speed for 1 minute. Strain through a medium mesh strainer into remaining soup.)

Sweet Pea Soup

Source: Cooks Illustrated

Modified By: Michael D'Attilo, Heather Hayden

Yield: about 6 1/2 cups (4 to 6 servings)

Ingredients

Remove the peas from the freezer just before starting the soup so that when you are ready to process them, as the stock simmers, they will be only partially thawed. To preserve its delicate flavor and color, this soup is best served immediately.

4 tbsp unsalted butter

8 medium shallots, minced (about 5 oz or 1 cup)

OR 1 medium leek, washed, white and light green parts chopped fine (about 1 1/2 cups)

2 tbsp unbleached all-purpose flour

3 1/2 cups canned low-sodium chicken broth

1 1/2 lb frozen peas, partially thawed at room temperature for 10 minutes (about 4 1/2 cups)

OR 4 1/2 cups FRESH peas, picked that day

12 small leaves Boston lettuce from 1 small head, leaves washed and dried (about 3oz)

1/2 cup heavy cream

Table salt and ground black pepper

Directions

Heat butter in large saucepan over low heat until foaming; add shallots or leek and cook, covered, until softened, 8 to 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, until thoroughly combined, about 30 seconds. Stirring constantly, gradually add chicken broth. Increase heat to high and bring to boil; reduce heat to medium-low and simmer 3 to 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, in the work bowl of a food processor fitted with a steel blade, process peas until coarsely chopped, about 20 seconds. Add peas and lettuce to simmering broth. Increase heat to medium-high, cover, and return to simmer; simmer 3 minutes. Uncover, reduce heat to medium-low, and continue to simmer 2 minutes longer.

Working in 2 batches, puree soup in blender until smooth; strain into large bowl. Rinse out and wipe saucepan; return pureed mixture to saucepan and stir in cream. Heat mixture over low heat until hot, about 3 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper; serve immediately.

Potato-Leek Soup (Base)

Source: Splendid Soups, James Peterson

Ingredients

2 Large leeks, white part only, washed and finely sliced (2 1/2 cups)
2 medium-size waxy potatoes, peeled, quartered, and finely chopped
1 quart chicken or vegetable broth, milk, or water
2 bunches of watercress, stems removed
Salt
Pepper
Unsalted butter

Directions

Simmer the leeks and potatoes with the broth until the potatoes are soft and can be crushed easily against the inside of the pot, about 15 minutes.

While the soup is simmering, cook the watercress leaves for 2 minutes in a small pot of boiling water to eliminate bitterness. Pour the water with the leaves into a colander and rinse them with cold water.

Stir the watercress leaves into the soup and season with salt and pepper. Ladle the soup into hot bowls and put a pat of butter on each one.

Notes:

This little base of potatoes and leeks can be finished with almost any fresh and tasty vegetable. Spinach is great, and you don't have to precook it as you do the watercress. Chard is also good, but since it can be quite strong, shred it and drop it into boiling water for a minute or two before adding it to the soup.

You'll find that your soups evolve around your shopping habits and what you have left in the refrigerator. I often add a couple of ribs of chopped celery to the base. I also like to use the shredded outer leaves from romaine or butter lettuce that are too tough to go into salad.

If you want a richer version - especially if you've used water as the cooking liquid - add 1/2 cup heavy cream to the soup before serving, or dollop a spoonful of sour cream, crème fraîche, butter, or herb butter onto each bowl.

Potato-Leek Soup (Garlic)

Source: Cook's Illustrated

Modified By: Michael D'Attilo

Ingredients

3 tablespoons unsalted butter

1 medium leek, white and light green parts halved lengthwise, washed, and chopped small (about 1 cup)

3 medium cloves garlic, minced or pressed through a garlic press (about 1 tablespoon)

2 heads garlic, rinsed, papery skins removed and top third of heads cut off and discarded

6 - 7 cups no-chicken or light vegetable broth (start with 6 cups and use extra cup to thin soup, if needed)

2 bay leaves

Table salt

2 ½ pounds russet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 7 1/2 cups)

(Optionally replace 1lb of russets with 1lb red bliss; can leave the peels on)

½ cup heavy cream

1 ½ teaspoons minced fresh thyme leaves

Ground black pepper

¼ cup minced fresh chives

Garlic Chips (Optional Garnish)

3 tablespoons olive oil

6 medium cloves garlic, sliced thin lengthwise

Table salt

Note: This soup benefits greatly from some kind of crunchy garnish. Garlic Chips, Oyster Crackers, Croutons (or garlic croutons), or Bacon chips (or vege-bacon chips) are all good options.

Instructions

Melt butter in Dutch oven over medium heat. When foaming subsides, add leeks and cook until soft (do not brown), 5 to 8 minutes. Stir in minced garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add garlic heads, broth, bay leaves, and ¾ teaspoon salt; partially cover pot and bring to simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until garlic is very tender when pierced with tip of knife, 30 to 40 minutes. Add potatoes and continue to simmer, partially covered, until potatoes are tender, 15 to 20 minutes.

Discard bay leaves. Remove garlic heads; using tongs or paper towels, squeeze garlic heads at root end until cloves slip out of their skins. Using fork, mash garlic to smooth paste in bowl.

Stir cream, thyme, and half of mashed garlic into soup; heat soup until hot, about 2 minutes. Taste soup; add remaining garlic paste if desired. Using immersion blender, process soup until creamy, with some potato chunks remaining. Alternatively, transfer 1 1/2 cups potatoes and 1 cup broth to blender or food processor and process until smooth. (Process more potatoes for thicker consistency.) Return puree to pot and stir to combine, adjusting consistency with more broth if necessary. Season with salt and pepper and serve, sprinkling each portion with chives and garlic chips.

For Garlic Chips

Heat oil and garlic in 10-inch skillet over medium-high heat. Cook, turning frequently, until light golden brown, about 3 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer garlic to plate lined with paper towels; discard oil. Sprinkle lightly with salt.

Cream of Asparagus Soup

Source: *Kristy (allrecipes.com)*

Modified by: *Michael D'Attilo*

Yields: *4-6 servings*

Ingredients

4 tbsp butter
4 stalks celery, chopped
1/2 large sweet onion, diced
3 tbsp all-purpose flour
6 cups vegetable broth
1 potato, peeled and diced
1 pound fresh asparagus, peeled with lower stems cut
salt and ground black pepper to taste
1 large package sliced shitake mushrooms
1/4 cup half-and-half cream
3/4 cup whole milk

Directions

Melt butter in a soup pot over medium heat. Add chopped celery and onion and cook until the onion is translucent (about 4 minutes.) Add flour to pot one tablespoon at a time, mixing after each addition.

While vegetables are cooking, chop off the heads of the asparagus stalks and set aside. Chop up peeled asparagus.

Add broth and bring to a boil. Add potato and chopped asparagus stalks, saving tips for later. Reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes.

Prepare a second soup pot. Pour soup from first pot into blender in batches, filling the pitcher no more than halfway full. Hold down lid of blender and puree soup for 20-30 seconds each batch. Pour pureed soup from blender into second pot, and bring second pot to a boil.

Stir in sliced mushrooms and asparagus tips, and cook for 5-10 minutes. Lower heat to simmer and add cream and milk. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Broccoli Cheddar Soup

Ingredients

3 tbsp unsalted butter
1 large onion, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1.5 lbs broccoli, stems peeled and sliced into 1/2-inch pieces, florets chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup heavy cream
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
3 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese, plus extra for garnish
salt
cayenne pepper

Instructions

1. Melt butter in large pot over medium heat. Add onion and cook until soft, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add broccoli stems and cook until bright green and just beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Stir in broth, increase heat to medium-high, and simmer until stems are tender, about 5 minutes. Add florets, cream, and nutmeg and simmer until florets are tender, about 5 minutes.

2. Puree soup in two batches in blender until smooth, return to pot, and bring to simmer over medium heat. Stir in cheddar until melted and season with salt and cayenne pepper. Serve, garnished with extra cheese. (Soup can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. Reheat over medium heat until hot, but do not boil or cheese will separate.)

Cost Breakdown

Broccoli cheddar soup -- ~\$14.99 (3+ meals for 2 people)
3 tbsp unsalted butter (32 tbsp for \$4.79) -- ~\$.45
1 large onion, chopped (1 for ~\$1.08) -- \$1.08
2 cloves garlic (5 bulbs for \$2.49) -- ~\$.10
1.5 lbs broccoli (1lb for \$1.99) -- ~ \$2.99
4 cups No Chicken vegan broth (28 cups for \$5.49) -- ~\$.78
1 cup heavy cream (1 pint for \$4.19) -- ~\$2.10
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg – negligible
12 oz shredded mild cheddar cheese (\$9.99/lb) -- ~\$7.49
salt
cayenne pepper

Thai Coconut Soup

Source: Allrecipes

Modified By: Michael D'Attilo

Ingredients

vegetable oil *(for frying, sesame preferred)*

~2 tbsp minced ginger

~1 1/2 tsp pickled lemongrass *(or one stalk of minced fresh; or 1 tsp lemongrass paste)*

~1 tsp thai chili garlic sauce

1 tsp red curry paste

2 tsp red chili paste

2 tablespoons fish sauce

(Can adjust quantities and add shrimp paste, pickled ginger, toasted sesame oil, etc. to taste)

4 cups chicken broth

1 tablespoon light brown sugar

1 tbsp fish sauce

1 lb boneless chicken breast *(or 1lb firm tofu, cut into large cubes)*

(Alternatively can use 1lb peeled, deveined medium shrimp)

1 tsp minced garlic

1 tsp minced ginger

3 (13.5 oz) cans coconut milk

1/2 lb fresh mushrooms, sliced *(Use the best you can get; shiitake > bella > white)*

1-2 fresh limes, sliced into thin disks *(or 2 tbsp fresh lime juice)*

Cilantro, finely chopped

salt to taste

Instructions

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat.

Cook the ginger, lemongrass, sauces, and pastes in the heated oil for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Slowly pour the chicken broth over the mixture, stirring continually. Add brown sugar and additional fish sauce. Simmer for 15 minutes.

While soup is simmering, heat 1 tsp minced ginger and garlic in oil or butter and sauté chicken or tofu over medium heat. Cook until tofu is just slightly crisp or chicken is cooked through.

(Note: traditional Thai soups would use 1 lb medium shrimp in lieu of chicken or tofu cooked in this step.)

Stir in coconut milk and mushrooms into the soup, and simmer until the mushrooms soften, about 5 minutes. Add cooked chicken or tofu, or shrimp, and simmer an additional 5 minutes *(if using shrimp, cook until no longer translucent)*.

Serve soup hot, with 1 slice of fresh lime per bowl, and/or a small amount of lime juice. Season to taste with salt and garnish with chopped cilantro.