

Potato-Leek Soup (Garlic)

Source: Cook's Illustrated

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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 3/4 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.

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