



CURRIED PEAR AND PARSNIP SOUP

For the Love of Good Food

It is often very satisfying to start a meal with soup or even have soup as the centerpiece of a light meal. As a result of our long involvement with India and the increasing number of British people of Indian origin, curry, which was an exotic spice mixture, has become commonplace. "Curry" is the most ordered dish when the Scots dine outside the home, beating "fish and chips" which was the traditional favorite.

The following recipe has in my view a perfect balance of flavors, and I hope that once you have tried it, you will agree with my assessment.

Ingredients (serves 4)

2oz butter

1 onion, chopped

2 bacon strips, chopped

12oz parsnips, peeled and chopped

2 under-ripe pears, peeled, cored and chopped

1 celery stick, chopped

2tsp mild curry powder

1 1/2tsp turmeric

1tbsp plain flour

1 ½ pints hot chicken broth

salt and pepper

chopped chives and sour cream for garnish

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add onion and bacon and soften over a gentle heat. Add the parsnips, pears and celery, cover and allow to cook in their own steam for 10 minutes.
2. Stir in the curry powder, turmeric and flour until absorbed.
3. Draw the saucepan away from the heat and stir in the hot chicken broth a little at a time until evenly mixed.
4. Cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until the parsnips are tender. Cool slightly.
5. Pour into a blender and process until smooth.
6. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve with a swirl of cream and chopped chives.

N.B. for Vegetarians. Variation on the above is to substitute water for the chicken broth, omit the bacon and the flour, add a peeled, chopped potato at the time you add the water. As you blend add milk to thin the consistency to that of thin cream. Serve as above.