



For the Love of Good Food

Winter Soups - Cheer up your January with these nourishing recipes!

On cold and wet winter nights we often look for comfort foods to warm us and make us feel cozy. What better way to do that than to have a steaming bowl of delicious soup? The following two recipes are simple, healthy yet elegant soups for all the family or to start off a meal with friends. Both make use of root crops that are at their best in the winter months. Potage Crecy is named after a town in Flanders in northern France where carrots and leeks grow at this time of year.

The second soup is an American hybrid using an orange colored turnip variety from Europe and the new world potato, and very tasty it is too.

Ingredients for carrot & leek "Potage Crecy" (serves 6)

1oz butter or oil

1lb peeled and roughly chopped carrots

1lb roughly chopped white part leeks

sufficient water or chicken broth to cover

1. Sweat carrots and leeks in the fat over a low heat in a covered 4-quart saucepan.
2. Once translucent, add broth and cook gently in the covered pan (about 45 minutes).
3. Once the vegetables are very soft, allow to cool slightly and put in blender. Process until smooth. Thin, if necessary, with stock, water or a little milk. Taste for seasoning, but it should not need either salt or pepper.
4. Serve with a swirl of low fat sour cream and chopped chives.

Ingredients for Sweet Potato-Rutabaga Soup with Bacon (8 cups)

1 ½ lb peeled chopped sweet potato (½ inch cubes)

1 ½ lb peeled chopped rutabaga (sometimes called Swede)

5 slices bacon chopped into ¼ inch pieces

1. Heat ½ bacon gently in a 4-quart pot to render the fat. Do not crisp.
2. Add vegetables, turn with a large spoon to cover in fat and cook over medium heat for 2 minutes.
3. Add 5 cups water, 1 tsp salt and 12 peppercorns. Bring to the boil. Lower heat and cover. Cook 45 minutes or more so vegetables are very soft.
4. Cook the remaining bacon in a large skillet until just crisp. Drain on paper towels.
5. Blend the vegetables in batches until very smooth. Return to the pot and adjust seasoning if necessary.
6. Serve in shallow bowls with crispy bacon crumbled on top.

N.B. You can replace bacon with an inch of finely chopped ginger and 4 cloves of garlic at the start of cooking, and sweat in olive oil. Serve with crispy croutons and snipped chives or cilantro.