

RECIPES FOR WINTER 1
DIANE WELLS

4 SOUPS

Soups can be clear, smooth or chunky. I think there are times for a soup where no specific ingredient is distinguishable, and others when all the constituents are seen jostling for attention in your bowl. Here are 4 of my favourite soups. I start with a chunky soup because I was introduced to it recently - it's a glorious orange coloured pumpkin soup that can be vegetarian or have meaty additions, the second is a smooth creamy cauliflower soup, then a mediterranean style fishy meal in a bowl and finally a clear and very simple soup.

1 PUMPKIN, CHESTNUT AND SPELT.

I tasted a version of this at The Grange Restaurant at Whateley. I thought it was fantastic. Originally it came from The Riverside Café recipes and their version included onion celery, meat, thyme, and chilli. I see these as interesting additions to a basic soup that requires only the 3 ingredients in the title with stock. I tried it out, making it up from the mouthful I had stolen from my husband's bowl at The Grange.

This is so simple but the spelt takes about an hour to cook so you need to think ahead.

Ingredients

250 g spelt cooked until soft - about an hour.

Small Pumpkin or squash (about 2 lbs or 1 kilo) wash, chop and simmer until soft

250 g pkt cooked chestnuts

1 litre stock – vegetable, chicken or ham but be careful about the salt content.

Optional - chopped onion, celery and fresh/dried chilli sweated in oil, and fresh/dried chopped thyme, chopped ham/pancetta.

Method

Since the spelt takes about an hour to cook this can be done the day before and kept in the fridge. When required - mix cooked spelt in its water, cooked pumpkin in its water and chestnuts from a packet of ready prepared. Heat gently, add stock and season to taste. Add any of optional extras

2 CAULIFLOWER AND CASHEWNUT SOUP

(adapted from Sophie Grigson's "Cooking for Friends")

Ingredients

1 medium Cauliflower
120 g cashew nuts
600 ml stock – vegetable or chicken
small onion finely chopped
30 g butter or margarine

To serve – for each bowl a tablespoon plain yoghurt, ground paprika, chopped parsley

Method

Wash cauliflower, divide into florets and simmer until just soft. Leave to cool
Meanwhile melt butter/margarine and cook onion in this until soft
Add nuts and cook gently to brown – be careful they can burn easily
Allow all of this to cool sufficiently to put into food processor to make smooth liquid

Add pepper and salt to taste

To serve

To each bowl -Add a spoon of yoghurt and sprinkle with ground paprika and chopped parsley

3 FISH SOUP - BOURRIDE

This is a meal in a dish – really a fish stew and one of my favourites for special suppers. If you want supper in a single dish to serve to friends – this could be it. It comes from a National Gallery recipe book – Feast for the Eyes (Riley 1997) Riley places this recipe on the same page as a snowy scene by Pissaro and explains:

“The pale colours of Parisian winter echoed in the muted tones of this richly satisfying fish stew, with its hidden reminder of the south in the hint of orange zest and blast of garlic in the aioli.”

So if that moves you, get a selection of fish and a seville orange, and check your store cupboard to make this.

For 6

1½ kilos firm fish eg halibut, haddock sword fish – filleted and skinned but keep the trimmings
a salmon steak boned and trimmed
2 cups dry white wine
3 bay leaves
pinch each of fennel and anise seeds
½ teasp chopped fresh thyme
6 black peppercorns, salt
1 seville or sharp orange
2 large leeks
2 large potatoes
4 celery stalks
1 carrot
¼ cup ground almonds
Alioli requiring garlic, egg yolks and olive oil - see below

Cut fish into pieces about 2 cms square

Simmer fish bones and trimmings in wine for about 20 minutes with bay leaves, anise fennel, pepper, salt and orange zest. Add a little water to make a strong stock. Prepare vegetables, chop and cook these in the strained fish stock and add ground almonds. All of this can be done in the pot you wish to use on the table eg le creuset casserole. Stir with wooden spoon from time to time to ensure no food sticks to the bottom of the pan. When almost cooked add the prepared fish and simmer until just cooked. The ground almonds prevent curdling that might otherwise occur when the alioli is added.

ALIOLI

3 garlic cloves
pinch of salt
2 free range egg yolks
500 mls extra virgin olive oil

Pound garlic and salt in mortar. This can be done with wooden spoon on wooden board - chop the garlic first. In mortar or bowl add egg yolks to garlic and salt and mix well. Add oil slowly at first drop by drop mixing to make smooth thick sauce that is well amalgamated. At this point the oil can be added more quickly.

Add 2/3 tablespoons of alioli to the soup and mix in gently. Serve the rest separately.

Serve with green salad and a chunk of home made/ artisan bread.

4 A CLEAR SOUP
also called Bohemian Soup

For me this is an anytime soup. I often make it for lunch. It goes well with cheese on toast.

1 or 2 onions finely chopped
1 tablespoon Butter/marg/dripping
500 ml stock

Melt fat in ovenproof casserole
Add onion and cook gently until onion becomes clear.
Add stock
Cook for few minutes
Adjust seasoning

Serve with cheese on toast /croutons – for these cut brown bread into cubes and bake in the oven

For cheese on toast try goats cheese eg Ticklemore from Devon (available from sagebury Cheese, Frome) and grill lightly