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by Liz Robb

Creamy broccoli and potato soup



Ingredients

1 tablespoon of olive oil
A large knob of butter
1 large white onion
1 large leek
500g broccoli
1 large potato, about 225g when peeled
135g blue stilton cheese
1 litre 100ml vegetable stock
2 tablespoons of double cream
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Paprika (optional)

Preparation

1. 1. First prepare the vegetables. Rinse the broccoli, remove any thick, tough stems and cut it into small florets, cutting larger ones into smaller pieces. Chop the onion finely. Top and tail the leek, cut down the middle and rinse well then slice into small chunks. Peel the potato then dice finely.
2. 2. In a very large saucepan, heat the oil and butter together. Add the onion and sauté over a low heat for 5 minutes, until softened but not browned, stirring occasionally. Then add the leek and cook for a further 2-3 minutes.
3. 3. Keep back 3 florets of broccoli for garnish and add the rest to the pan, stirring to mix with the onion and leek. Then stir in the potato, making sure that it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan. Add the stock, a little at a time, then leave to simmer gently for 20-25 minutes, or until the potato is cooked through.
4. 4. Steam the reserved broccoli florets for about 5 minutes, then refresh by running under cold water.
5. 5. Add the crumbled cheese to the pan and stir for a few moments until it has melted. Turn off the heat and use a hand blender to blend everything into a thick, smooth soup.
6. 6. Reheat, add the cream and season to taste. Be careful, you will need very little salt because of the saltiness of the cheese.
7. 7. To serve, garnish with a few very thin slices of the reserved broccoli, and sprinkle on some paprika, or an extra grinding of black pepper if you prefer.
8. Notes: The small amount of blue stilton used in this recipe means that the flavour is quite subtle, but you could use a mature cheddar instead if you don't like blue cheeses.
9. This recipe produces a fairly thick soup. To adjust the consistency to your taste, simply

use a little more or less stock.

10 For those wanting to reduce the calorie count further, add crème fraiche or Greek yoghurt instead of the double cream, stirring well to blend it in, or perhaps replace some of the stock with semi skimmed milk instead.

11 Or you may wish to increase the modest amount of double cream used to make it a more luxurious dish!

Cooks Note

This rich, thick autumn soup is a really tasty way to "eat your greens"! A healthy snack or starter, it is delicious served with slices of fresh wholemeal bread and butter.

It's easy to quickly produce a big creamy panful, with little preparation needed. You can make plenty because it tastes just as good eaten the next day if kept in the fridge, and it freezes well too.

Broccoli, or calabrese, is packed with vitamin C, fibre and lots of other nutrients and minerals which contribute to a healthy diet, as are other brassica or leafy green vegetables. It is seasonal in the UK in the late summer and autumn, but is easily available to buy all the year round, and can be steamed, boiled or even eaten raw. Unfortunately, when served as a vegetable, I know I should eat it but I don't like the taste! This soup is perfect for me, and for anyone else reluctant to eat their greens, because the ingredients all combine to give a delicious flavour