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## Roasted Garlic Soup with Parmesan Croutons



## Ingredients

5 heads of garlic

Olive oil Salt and freshly milled black pepper 1 tablespoon of sunflower oil 40g butter 4-5 large onions A few sprigs of fresh thyme 12 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed 1 litre of chicken stock 150ml milk 5 heaped tablespoons of crème fraiche Half a small lemon 4 small slices of day old bread Parmesan cheese A handful of chives

## Preparation

- 1 1.
- 2 Preheat the oven to 180 degrees or 160 degrees fan oven.
- 3 2. Trim off the top of 5 garlic heads, just showing the tops of the garlic cloves inside, and pull off some of the papery outside layers. Put the heads into a loosely wrapped foil parcel, drizzled with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and seasoned with salt and pepper. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until the cloves of garlic are soft and golden.
- 4 3. Allow the heads to cool for a few minutes then squeeze out the roasted garlic
- 5 if you press the bottom of each clove it should pop out quite easily.
- 6 4. Peel and thinly slice the onions. Heat the sunflower oil and butter gently in a large saucepan, then sauté the onions over a low heat for 5 minutes or until soft. Add the crushed garlic and pull the thyme leaves off the stalks and add to the pan. Cook for another 3 minutes, then stir in the roasted garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes.
- 7 5. Pour in the hot chicken stock and bring to a simmer. Cook gently, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes.
- 8 6. Blend the soup into a smooth puree. Reheat in the pan, pour the milk into the soup and heat gently, then spoon in the crème fraiche, stir and heat through. Add the lemon juice a little at a time to taste
- 9 you may not need it all. Season well with salt and black pepper.
- 10 7. To make the croutons, heat the oven to 190 degrees or 170 degrees fan oven. Cut the bread into bite sized pieces and place on an oiled baking tray. [Bread cut from a rustic

style loaf is best for this.] Drizzle on a little olive oil and bake for 5 minutes.

- 11** 8. Turn over the croutons and grate parmesan cheese on top of them, then bake for a further 5 minutes.
- 12** 9. To serve, ladle the soup into bowls, sprinkle with chopped chives and arrange a small heap of croutons on the top.

## **Cooks Note**

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