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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