

Vegetarian French Onion Soup

Serves 6

This recipe is very loosely adapted from Martha Stewart Living.

2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 pounds yellow onions, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/3 cup dry sherry
3 cups Roasted Vegetable Stock (recipe below)
2 sprigs fresh thyme
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 loaf sturdy white bread (like a sourdough or other artisan bread)
6 ounces Gruyere cheese, grated on the large holes of a box
2 ounces Cheddar Cheese, grated on the large holes of a box

1. In a large heavy pot, add olive oil and butter. Heat over medium low heat. Add onions, spreading them out in as thin a layer as possible. Sprinkle onions with sugar, and cook, stirring just as needed to keep onions from sticking, until they are melting and soft, golden brown, and beginning to caramelize, about 45 minutes to an hour.
2. Sprinkle flour over onions, and stir to coat. Add sherry, stock, and thyme, and bring to a simmer. Cook, partially covered, for about 30 minutes, to allow the flavors to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Meanwhile, lightly toast bread under a broiler; set aside. Ladle hot soup into six ovenproof bowls. Arrange the bowls on a baking pan. Place a slice of toasted bread over each bowl of soup. Sprinkle 1/2 cup grated cheese over bread in each bowl, and place under the broiler until cheese is melted and crusty brown around the edges. Watch carefully that bread doesn't burn. Serve immediately.

Roasted Vegetable Stock

Makes 3 Quarts

This recipe is the creation of Mark Bittman, from his wonderful book, *"How to Cook Everything Vegetarian."* (Wiley Publishing 2007). You will only need 3 cups of the stock for the onion soup, so freeze the remainder for another day.

1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
2 well-washed leeks, cut into chunks, or 2 large onions, quartered (don't bother to peel)
4 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
2 celery stalks, cut into chunks
1 parsnip, peeled and cut into chunks (optional)
2 potatoes, peeled and quartered
6 cloves garlic
15 white button mushrooms, halved
1/4 cup of parsley leaves, plus 10 parsley sprigs
3 sprigs fresh thyme
1/4 cup soy sauce
10 black peppercorns, whole
1/2 cup white wine
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 450° F. Combine oil, leeks, carrots, celery, parsnips, potatoes, garlic and mushrooms in a large roasting pan. Stir to coat all the vegetables with oil. Put the pan in the oven and roast, shaking the pan occasionally and turning the ingredients over once or twice until everything is nicely browned. This will take about 45 minutes. Don't rush it.
2. Using a slotted spoon, scoop the roasted vegetables into a large stockpot. Add herbs, soy sauce, peppercorns, wine, kosher salt and 2 quarts of water. Turn the heat to high.
3. Put the roasting pan over a burner on high heat. And add 2 to 4 cups of water, depending on depth of pan. Bring it to a boil and cook, scraping off all the bits of food that have stuck to the bottom. Pour this mixture into the stockpot (along with 2 more cups of water if you only used 2 for deglazing).
4. Bring stockpot to a boil, partially cover and adjust the heat so the mixture sends up a few bubbles at a time. Cook until the vegetables are very soft, 30 to 45 minutes. Strain, pressing on the vegetables to extract as much juice as possible. Taste and add more soy sauce, salt or pepper if needed before using or storing. Will keep in the fridge for 3 days or in the freezer for up to 3 months.