

Salt and Serenity

Cheddar Broccoli Soup

This recipe comes from the March 2011 issue of Cook's Illustrated Magazine.

Serves 6-8

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 pounds broccoli, florets roughly chopped into 1-inch pieces, stems trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
1 medium onion, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)
2 medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
1 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard powder
Pinch cayenne pepper
1 teaspoon Kosher salt
3–4 cups water
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
2 cups vegetable stock
2 ounces baby spinach (2 loosely packed cups)
3 ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (3/4 cup)
1 1/2 ounces Parmesan cheese, grated fine (about 3/4 cup), plus extra for serving
Freshly ground black pepper
Kosher salt

1. Heat butter in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When foaming subsides, add broccoli, onion, garlic, dry mustard, cayenne, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Add 1 cup water and baking soda. Bring to simmer, cover, and cook until broccoli is very soft, about 20 minutes, stirring once during cooking.
2. Add vegetable stock and 2 cups water and increase heat to medium-high. When mixture begins to simmer, stir in spinach and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Transfer half of soup to blender, add cheddar and Parmesan, and process until smooth, about 1 minute. Transfer soup to medium bowl and repeat with remaining soup.
3. Return soup to Dutch oven, place over medium heat and bring to simmer. Adjust consistency of soup with up to 1 cup water. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve, passing extra Parmesan separately.