

Cook's Illustrated Corn Chowder

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Serves 6

8 ears corn, husks and silk removed
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 onion, chopped fine
4 slices bacon, halved lengthwise then cut into 1/4 inch pieces
2 teaspoons minced fresh thyme
Salt and pepper
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
5 cups water
3/4 pound red or Yukon gold potatoes, cut into 1/2 inch pieces
1 cup half-and-half
Sugar (optional)
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil, or chives

1. Using chef's knife or corn stripper cut kernels from corn; transfer to bowl and set aside (you should have 5 to 6 cups kernels). Be careful to remove only the part of the corn kernel sticking out of the cob; cutting deeper will pull off fibrous material. Holding cobs over second bowl, use back of butter knife to firmly scrape any remaining pulp on cobs into bowl (you should have 2 to 2 1/2 cups pulp). Transfer pulp to center of clean kitchen towel set in medium bowl. Wrap towel tightly around pulp and squeeze tightly until dry. Discard pulp in towel and set corn juice aside (you should have about 2/3 cup juice).
2. Melt butter in Dutch oven over medium heat; add onion, bacon, thyme, 2 teaspoons salt, and 1 teaspoon pepper; cook, stirring frequently, until onion is softened and edges are beginning to brown, 8 to 10 minutes. Stir in flour and cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes. Whisking constantly, gradually add water and bring to boil. Add corn kernels and potatoes. Return to simmer; reduce heat to medium-low and cook until potatoes have softened, 15 to 18 minutes.
3. Process 2 cups chowder in blender until smooth, 1 to 2 minutes. Return puree to chowder; add half-and-half and return to simmer. Remove pot from heat and stir in reserved corn juice. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and up to 1 tablespoon sugar. Serve, sprinkling with basil.