

Salt and Serenity

Caramelized Leek and Potato Soup

Very slightly adapted from Melissa Clark's New York Times Cooking recipe for Golden Leek and Potato Soup.

Serves 6

6 large leeks, white and light green part only
4 tablespoons unsalted butter or extra-virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely diced or grated on microplane
2 bay leaves
4 large sprigs fresh thyme
4 large sprigs fresh sage
4 large sprigs parsley
1 large handful celery leaves (optional)
8 cups water
1 tablespoon kosher salt, more to taste
1 teaspoon black pepper, more to taste
4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled, halved and thinly sliced
Chopped parsley leaves for garnish (optional)

1. Slice leeks lengthwise into quarters and chop into ½ inch dice. Place diced leeks in a bowl of cold water and swish leeks in water until leeks are clean. Lift leeks out of bowl of water and discard dirty, sandy water.
2. Melt the butter or heat the oil in the bottom of a large pot over medium-high heat. Stir in the leeks, turn down heat to low and cook, stirring frequently, until leeks are soft and dark golden brown, 25-30 minutes. Stir in the garlic for the last 3 minutes of cooking.
3. Place bay leaves, thyme, sage, parsley sprigs and celery leaves on a large square of cheesecloth. Tie up into a tidy bundle, using cotton twine. Stir stock or water into the leeks. Add the bundle of herbs, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce immediately to medium-low; simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add the potatoes and simmer soup until potatoes are very tender and falling apart, about 45 minutes. Using a hand held immersion blender, puree soup for about 5-10 seconds, leaving it mostly chunky, but thickening the broth slightly. Taste and adjust seasoning. Ladle into bowls and top with parsley for garnish.

