

Salt and Serenity

Cauliflower, Leek, and White Bean Soup

This is a twist on the classic Potato and Leek soup, Vichyssoise. It's lightened up by replacing the potato with cauliflower, but with the addition of white beans, you still get all the creamy texture, plus the added protein.

Serves 4

Soup:

1 large head of cauliflower, about 1 kilogram
2 Tablespoons olive oil
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
1 teaspoon cumin
½ - 1 teaspoon Aleppo pepper
2 large or 3 small-medium sized leeks
2 teaspoon butter
2 teaspoons olive oil
½ teaspoon Diamond Crystal kosher salt
¼ teaspoon black pepper
3-4 Tablespoons water
1 can white beans, drained and rinsed
1 sprig fresh thyme
4-6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
1 Tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar

Garnish:

Roasted cauliflower pieces (see step #6 in recipe)
Toasted Pumpkin seeds
Chive oil (recipe below) or best quality extra virgin olive oil
Freshly chopped chives (if not making your own chive oil)

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Rinse the whole head of cauliflower under cold water. Remove the outer green leaves from the cauliflower base. Trim the stem away from the cauliflower.
2. Place the cauliflower on a cutting board, stem side up. Using a sharp knife, cut into slices, about ¾ inch thick. (You'll get 2-3 full slices from each head.) Coarsely chop slices into 2-inch pieces. There will be lots of crumbled bits and some larger pieces. Not to worry, it will all be fine.
3. Transfer chopped cauliflower and all the little crumbled bits to a parchment lined baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil. Sprinkle with salt, cumin, and Aleppo. Use your hands to mix and get all the cauliflower evenly coated. Roast in oven for 20 minutes. Remove and set aside.
4. Remove root end and most of green tops from leeks. Save these to make stock if you like. Slice leeks lengthwise in half and slice into ¼-inch pieces. 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.
5. Heat butter and olive oil in large pot over medium-low heat until foaming; stir in leeks, increase heat to medium. Stir and cook for 2-3 minutes. Add salt and pepper and continue sautéing over low heat. If leeks begin to burn or stick to pan, add a few tablespoons of water. Continue cooking for 5-7 minutes until leeks are soft and translucent.
6. Add roasted cauliflower to pot with the leeks. Save a few of the prettier pieces for garnish if you wish.

7. Add drained and rinsed white beans, thyme sprig and 4 cups stock. Reserve last 2 cups stock for after pureeing, to adjust thickness to your taste.
8. Simmer on low heat for about 10 minutes.
9. Transfer soup to blender and puree. If not serving right away, chill soup for up to 2 days.
10. Gently reheat soup and add additional stock to thin it out if it is too thick for you. Just before serving, stir 1 Tablespoon sherry or red wine vinegar into soup.
11. Ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with roasted cauliflower pieces and toasted pumpkin seeds. Drizzle with chive oil or olive oil. Sprinkle with extra Aleppo pepper if desired.

Chive Oil

1 cup sunflower or safflower oil
1 teaspoon Diamond Crystal Kosher salt
4 ounces chives, washed

1. Place the oil in the refrigerator. This will help preserve bright green colour when blending with chives. Prepare an ice bath: fill a large bowl with ice cubes and add enough cold water to cover the ice and mix it well. Set aside
2. Bring a medium sized pot of water to a boil and add salt. Add washed chives and cook for 10-15 seconds. Drain chives and immediately plunge into ice water. Once cool, transfer to a tea towel and gently squeeze dry.
3. Place chives and chilled oil in a blender or a food processor, and puree on high speed for 2 to 3 minutes or until completely smooth and well combined.
4. Line a fine mesh strainer with a cheese cloth (or a coffee filter also works well) and transfer the oil to the strainer. Set aside to filter. This will take a few hours. Don't press on the oil to hurry the filtering process. You will get a cloudy oil. Let gravity do its work. Discard coffee filter or cheesecloth and transfer oil to a clean jar. It will keep for about a week in the fridge.