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Warm up with winter soups

There is no doubt that at this time of year you are craving warm, hearty comfort food. Casseroles, one-pot meals, and chunky stews are all excellent options, but when there's a real chill in the air, nothing will warm you up quite as well as a big bowl of soup.

Our Seafood Chowder recipe is chock-full of vegetables and seafood, all simmered in a creamy, flavourful broth. While the end result is, indeed, impressive, this soup comes together quickly and requires very little prep work. In less than half an hour, you will have a thick, hearty chowder. All that will be left to do is break up a nice crusty baguette to sop it up with.

If you're not partial to seafood, our Three Onion Soup will certainly hit the spot. It is easy to make, packed with onion flavour, and topped with irresistible cheese toasts. What more could you ask for?

SEAFOOD CHOWDER

1 tbsp salted butter
1 tbsp grapeseed oil or canola oil
1 cup diced celery
1 cup diced onion
2 cups cubed peeled yellow potatoes (1/2 inch)
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 cup dry white wine
6 cups no-salt-added chicken broth or fish stock
1 1/2 cups whipping cream
1 lb (0.5 kg) firm-fleshed white fish fillets, cut into 1 inch pieces
1/2 lb (0.25 kg) frozen peeled and deveined raw shrimp, thawed and rinsed
6 oz (175 g) smoked candied salmon, chopped
1 can (5 oz/142 g) whole baby clams, drained
1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground pepper*
Chopped fresh parsley*

1. Melt butter with oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add celery and onion; sauté until softened, about 4 minutes.
2. Add potatoes and garlic; stir to combine. Add wine and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds.

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3. Add broth and cream; stir to combine. Bring to a simmer and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until potatoes are tender, about 13 minutes.
4. Add fish, shrimp, salmon and clams; stir to combine. Return to a simmer and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until fish and shrimp are cooked through, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Stir in lemon juice. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
6. Serve topped with parsley. Serves 8.

Cook's Note: Look for smoked candied salmon in specialty fish stores or in the seafood refrigerator or freezer case of grocery stores.

Nutritional analysis per serving:

429 calories, 26.3 g fat, 30.6 g protein, 15.6 g carbohydrate, 1.2 g fibre, 352 mg sodium

*Ingredient not included in nutritional analysis.

THREE ONION SOUP

1/4 cup salted butter
4 large sweet onions, sliced (about 12 cups)
2 cups sliced leeks (white and tender light green portions only)
2 cups sliced shallots
1 tsp caraway seed
1/4 cup dry sherry
1/4 cup dry white wine
3 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
6 cups no-salt-added beef broth
12 toasted baguette slices, 1/2 inch thick
2/3 cup shredded Gruyère cheese
Salt and freshly ground pepper*

1. Melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium-low heat. Add onions, leeks, shallots and caraway seed; cook, stirring occasionally, until onion mixture is golden brown and reduced, about 45 - 50 minutes.
2. Increase heat to medium-high. Add sherry, wine, thyme and bay leaf; cook, stirring, until liquid is reduced by half. Add broth and stir to combine. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 20 - 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, to prepare cheese toasts, preheat oven to 375°F.
5. Place baguette slices on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet. Sprinkle cheese over baguette slices.
6. Bake just until cheese is melted.
7. Remove soup from heat. Remove and discard thyme and bay leaf. Season to taste with salt and pepper.
8. Serve topped with cheese toasts. Serves 6 as a starter.



Nutritional analysis per serving:

311 calories, 12.1 g fat, 11.9 g protein, 38.3 g carbohydrate, 4.6 g fibre, 348 mg sodium

*Ingredient not included in nutritional analysis.