

French Onion Soup

This soup serves two as a main course and four as a starter using smaller heat-proof bowls. The soup will improve by sitting in the fridge for a day or two. If it is too thick, add water. Finish with the toast and cheese before serving.

The caramelized onions by itself are a treat and can be served many different ways—on hamburgers, sausages, or bruschetta. It is best to cook this soup in a heavy four-quart covered saucepan. I keep some leftover baguette slices in my freezer. I used a grated mixture of Gruyère but many recipes use Comté cheese. A mixture of Swiss and Gruyère will also work.

Ingredients:

- 4 TBS butter
- 1 TBS olive oil
- 2 pounds white sweet onions
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper
- ½ tsp sugar
- 1 ½ cup white wine
- 1 quart beef stock
- 2 cups water
- 1 vegetable bouillon with sea salt and herbs
- 2 sprigs of thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 4-6 ½-inch baguette slices
- a clove of garlic (peeled and halved)
- 2 tsp cognac
- 1 cup (or more) grated Gruyère or Comté cheese.

Directions:

Peel the onions, cut them in half lengthwise and thinly slice them. Melt the butter, add the oil and onions and cook slowly in a covered heavy saucepan for 15 minutes.

Add the salt, pepper and sugar and continue to cook uncovered for about 30-40 minutes until the onions are golden brown. Stir often, scratching the bottom clean. Reduce the heat if the onions start to darken. Ideally, you want that dark, golden brown hue.

Raise the heat, add the wine and cook for about 8-10 minutes until almost all the wine has evaporated. Add the broth, water, vegetable bullion, thyme, and bay leaves. Simmer uncovered for 20-30 minutes. Season to taste.

Bake the toast slices in a 350 degree oven for several minutes until they are somewhat dry. Rub some garlic on the toast. One of my favorite bloggers added some mustard to one side of the toast. I didn't, but might try it next time.

Add ¼ tsp of the cognac to the bottom of the oven-safe bowls and fill with heated soup, leaving some space for the toast and cheese. Lay the toast on top of the soup and add as much grated cheese as you want. Put some tiny little slivers of butter on top of the cheese and broil until the cheese is melted and starts to bubble. Watch closely, so you don't burn your cheese. You might want to put a cookie sheet on a lower rack in the oven to prevent any dripping. Serve immediately.

Guten Appetit!

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