

LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

This silky, simple soup is one of my very favorite things to make. This recipe is perfect with some crusty, toasted bread. It doubles and freezes very well.

Ingredients.

4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
1/2 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
1 1/4 pound thinly sliced leeks, white and light green parts only (ends discarded)
1 quart low-sodium vegetable stock
1 cup water
1 pound peeled and cubed russet potatoes
1/2 cup half and half
1/2 cup heavy cream
kosher salt
freshly ground black pepper
mascarpone cheese (optional)
very finely minced Italian parley or chives
Maldon or flaky salt

Directions.

To clean the leeks, place the sliced leeks in a large bowl and cover them in cold water. Agitate to loosen any dirt that is hiding in the layers. Lift the leeks from the water bath into a strainer and drain.

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, melt 2 tablespoons of butter with a 1/2 teaspoon of olive oil. Add in the leeks, a 1/2 teaspoon of salt and a few turns of pepper. Sauté the leeks for about five minutes on medium high heat until they have softened a bit. Reduce the heat to low and continue to cook the leeks for another 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, until they are very soft and tender.

Add the broth, water, and potatoes to the pot. Bring it to a simmer and cook, uncovered, for about 30 minutes, or until the potatoes are completely cooked and soft. Move the pot off of the heat before stirring in the cream, half and half, and the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter.

Using an immersion blender purée the soup until smooth. If you don't have an immersion blender, transfer the soup in batches to blender and purée until smooth. Leave the plug off, covering the whole on the small hole with a thickly folded towel. This allows some of the steam to escape so you're not created any pressure. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Transfer the soup to bowls, top with a little mascarpone cheese, a pinch of flaky salt and fresh herbs.

Serves 10 adults.

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