

Provençal Spring Vegetable Soup with Sweet Corn + Courgette

Serves 10

INGREDIENTS

For the Soup:

1 lb bacon, cut into lardons

1 tbsp. butter

3 cups diced onions

3 cloves garlic, minced

3 ribs celery, diced

3 cups potatoes, peeled and diced (2 large)

1 cup clam juice

4 cups chicken stock

1/4 cup flour

1 tsp onion powder

1 tsp garlic powder

2 cups half and half

2.5 cups corn kernels

2 cups zucchini, peel on, diced

1/4 cup fresh tarragon, finely chopped

For the Tartare:

1 whole garlic bulb

1 tsp olive oil

1 medium yellow zucchini

1 medium green zucchini

1 Tbsp olive oil

2 tbsp minced fresh parsley

2 tbsp minced fresh basil

2 tsp lemon juice

1 tbsp olive oil

1/2 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

For the Black Garlic Crostini:

1/4 cup butter

1 clove black garlic, finely chopped

1 tsp fresh tarragon, finely chopped

1/2 tsp salt

10 slices of baguette

2 Tbsp olive oil

METHOD

For the Soup:

1. Heat a stock pot over medium high heat, and add bacon lardons. Cook until golden brown and crispy. Remove bacon lardons from the pot, and set half aside for garnish, and the other half to add back into the soup. Strain all but 1 tbsp of bacon fat from pot, and set aside for another use.
2. Add butter to the remaining bacon fat, and continue to heat at medium high. Add in diced onions, and cook for 5 minutes. Season generously with salt and pepper. Add the garlic, and celery, and sauté briefly.
3. Add potatoes, clam juice and chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then simmer until the potatoes are tender. Mix flour and seasonings, and temper in 1 - 2 cups of soup liquid before adding to the pot. Mix well, bring to a boil, add cream, corn, zucchini, tarragon, and simmer for 10 - 15 minutes. Add in the bacon lardons. Season to taste.

For the Tartare:

Cut top off garlic head, and remove papery outer skin from garlic bulb (do not peel or separate cloves). Brush with olive oil. Wrap in heavy-duty foil. Bake at 400° for 45 -55 minutes or until softened. Set aside to cool.

Slice zucchini into 1/2 " thick pieces, toss with olive oil + season with salt and pepper. Heat a cast iron grill pan to medium high, and grill on both sides, until nice char marks are achieved. Set aside to cool, and dice into 1/2 " pieces. Squeeze softened garlic from bulb and finely chop.

In a bowl, combine the parsley, basil, lemon juice, salt, pepper and olive oil. Add and garlic, zucchini; mix well.

For the Black Garlic Crostini:

Place the softened butter in a small mixing bowl. Carefully chop the black garlic as finely as possible, without mashing it too much. You want it to be visible in the butter. Mix in the tarragon + salt.

Brush slices of baguette on both sides with olive oil. Heat a cast iron grill pan over medium high heat, and grill baguette on both sides. Once removed from the grill, top with black garlic butter.