

# Cauliflower and Cheddar Soup with Rocket and Walnut Pesto

Well winter has almost arrived and what better way to welcome it than with a hearty, creamy, scrummy soup! Earthy cauliflower paired with the sharpness of a fine, mature cheddar and topped off with a crunchy rocket and walnut pesto pretty much ticks all the boxes, me thinks!

Prep time: 20 Minutes  
\$ Low Budget

Cooking time: 40 Minutes

Serves 6

2 tbs of olive oil

25gm of butter

1 whole cauliflower roughly chopped, stalks and all

2 large potatoes, peeled and chopped (any kind will do)

2 leeks, washed and finely sliced

3 cloves of garlic, chopped

1 litre of salt reduced chicken stock

500ml of water

1 cup of mature cheddar, grated

200ml of light cooking cream

Sea salt and pepper

Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

For the Pesto:

100gm of baby rocket leaves

2 sprigs of basil, roughly chopped

1/2 a cup of toasted walnuts\*

1/2 a cup of grated parmesan cheese

1/2 a cup of extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt and pepper

Heat a large heavy based saucepan. Melt the butter and add the olive oil to

prevent the butter from burning before adding the leeks and garlic. Saute` gently until the leeks are nice and soft and the kitchen is smelling amazing....

Throw in the cauliflower and potatoes and saute` for a minute or two before adding the stock and water. The measurements are a rough guide but you want the liquid to just cover the cauliflower. Pop the lid on, bring to the boil and allow to bubble away at a nice simmer for approximately half an hour or until potatoes are tender.

Remove the soup from the heat and using a hand blender (every kitchen should have one!) or a normal blender, blend the soup until all lumps have disappeared and you have a nice, thick, smooth consistency. Return to the heat, bring to a low simmer and add the cheddar and cream and season with salt and pepper. Give it a good stir to make sure all the cheese has melted through the soup. It is a great idea to have a taste here and adjust the seasoning if you think it needs it.

To make the pesto, place all ingredients except the olive oil in a food processor and pulse a couple of times to get started. Process the mix on low while adding the olive oil until you have a lovely paste. Have a taste and add more seasoning if necessary.

To plate up, ladle a generous amount of soup into large deep serving bowls, top with a dollop of pesto and drizzle with extra virgin olive oil. Finish off with a nice sprinkle of black pepper and serve with crusty bread.

\* Toast the walnuts in a hot dry pan for 3-5 minutes. Keep them moving as nuts can burn quite quickly....