

Potato, Cauliflower & Fennel Soup



Well wan't this just a big old bowl of comfort. A pimped up version of potato and leek soup, purely because I had half a cauliflower and a fennel bulb in the fridge that needed to be used and I loathe waste. I roasted the fennel and cauliflower for maximum flavour as roasting really brings out the natural sweetness of vegetables. The little charred ends disappear once it has had a chance to soften in the soup liquid and it then blends to a velvety smoothness with a way more intense flavour. The addition of panfried pancetta, toasted flaked almonds and a herb oil wasjust because. You could leave the speck out to make this a lovely vegetarian soup, if that is your preference.

Prep time: 20 Minutes

Cooking time: 45 Minutes

\$\$ Medium Budget

Serves 6

40gm of butter

Olive oil for drizzling and frying

3 cloves of garlic

1/2 a bunch of thyme, tied with a string

6 large good potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

2 large leeks, green part removed, washed well, halved and sliced

1/2 a cauliflower, cut into florets

1 fennel bulb, quartered, core removed and cut into wedges

1 cup of dry white wine

1.5 litres of low sodium chicken or vegetable stock

200ml of cream

Sea salt and cracked black pepper

200gm of pancetta or speck, cut into lardons

1/2 a cup of natural flaked almonds, toasted

Serve with crusty bread

For the Herb Oil:

4 sprigs of dill, finely chopped

4 sprigs of parsley, finely chopped

8 chives, finely chopped

1 pinch of salt

1/2 a cup of good extra virgin olive oil

A squeeze of lemon

Preheat the oven to 200°C.

To make the soup, place the cauliflower and fennel on a large, lined baking tray and drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Bake in the oven for 20-25 minutes or until golden and tender.

Heat a large pot and add the butter and a lug of olive oil. Fry the leeks until they are nice and soft and then add the garlic, thyme and potatoes. Fry for a few minutes and then pour in the wine. Scrape the bottom of the pot to remove any golden bits and allow it to reduce by half before pouring in the stock. Stir, bring to the boil, reduce to a simmer and pop a lid on for about 15-20 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

Remove the cauliflower and fennel from the oven and add it to the soup. Simmer for another 20 minutes so that everything is wonderfully mushy and then remove the thyme stalks from the soup. Use a stick blender or food processor to blend the soup until it is super smooth and velvety. Season with salt and black pepper to your taste and pour in the cream. Stir to combine and allow to simmer gently until you are ready to serve. You can always make this ahead too and just reheat when ready.

Fry the pancetta in a pan until golden and crispy.

Place the herbs in a mortar and pestle with a good pinch of salt and pound until the herbs are bruised and mushy. Pour in the olive oil and lemon juice and stir well to combine.

To serve the soup, ladle into bowls and drizzle with the herb oil. Sprinkle over the fried pancetta and toasted almonds and serve with cracked pepper and crusty bread.

Leftover chicken stock? Freeze for later use or you may like to cook this....

Leftover herbs? You may like to cook this....

<https://emsfoodforfriends.com.au/braised-chicken-beans-pancetta-tomatoes/>