

Cream of Chestnut and Fennel Soup

Yield: 6-8 Servings

Chestnuts have a unique taste and texture that pair well with fennel and apple. This soup combines those ingredients in a creamy and smooth soup. Although a dry white wine can be used in place of the cider, the addition of dry hard cider provides a subtle taste of apple. In addition, any leftover cider can be served with the meal, as it pairs well with the soup.

Ingredients

- 1 shallot, chopped
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts chopped
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ¼ C dry hard cider
- ½ fennel bulb, core and stalk removed, and coarsely chopped
- 1 ¾ chestnuts, roasted, shelled/skinned and coarsely chopped
- 1 ½ C chicken stock
- 2 C water
- ½ C Half and Half
- ¼ C granny smith apple (or other tart apple) skinned, cored and small diced

In a 4qt pot, sauté shallot and leeks in 2 tablespoons of butter until softened. Deglaze pan with cider and then add fennel, 1 ½ cups of chestnuts (reserving other ¼ cup for garnish), chicken stock and water. Bring to a simmer, cover and cook until the fennel has softened, about twenty minutes.

Remove the pot from the heat and allow the soup to cool slightly. Puree in a food processor or blender until smooth. Return the soup to the pot, add the half and half, and season to taste with salt and pepper. Then gently reheat the soup, adding additional chicken stock if it is too thick.

While the soup is reheating, sauté the reserved ¼ cup of chestnuts and diced apple in 2 tablespoons of butter, until the chestnuts are crunchy and the apple golden brown. Season with salt and pepper and keep warm until the soup is ready to serve.

Serve the soup in warmed bowls and top with 1 tablespoon of the chestnut and apple garnish.

Recipe by David Musial
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