

## LEEK & POTATO SOUP

A good homemade soup tastes so much better than a canned one, and this one is quick and easy to make (about 45 minutes). It freezes well to, so it is a good idea to make more than you need. Serve with chunks of crusty bread for lunch or supper, or swirl in a little extra cream for an elegant first course.

When leek and potato soup is served chilled it is known as vichyssoise. For a velvety, smooth finish, press soup through a sieve after pureeing, let cool, then cover and chill in the refrigerator for at least 4 hours. Chilling dulls the flavor, so taste the soup before serving and add salt, pepper, nutmeg, or cream as necessary, snipped chives are the classic garnish for vichyssoise.

### SOME KEYS TO SUCCESS

- Use homemade stock if you can; it gives depth of flavor. If this is not available, use 2 bouillon cubes dissolved in 5 cups boiling water. Canned Chicken broth is a good alternative, but more expensive. Vegetable stock can be used instead of chicken, and gives a lighter taste
- To achieve a really smooth and creamy result, make sure that all the ingredients are soft before you puree the soup. Any pieces of undercooked vegetable will give the finished soup a lumpy texture.
- When using a handheld blender, make the soup in the largest pot you have and keep the blades under the level of the soup while pureeing. This will help keep splashes to a minimum.
- If you do not have an electric handheld blender, use a food processor or a freestanding blender, but cool the soup slightly and first and puree in batches. If you have none of these place sieve over large bowl. Pour the soup in and press solids through with the back of a spoon.

### INGREDIENTS

3 leeks (about ½ pound)

1 medium onion

2 tbsp butter

1 lb potatoes

5 cups chicken stock

Salt and pepper to taste

nutmeg to taste

½ cup light cream

1 tsp lemon juice

2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley to garnish

1. TRIM THE LEEKS, leaving some green at the top to color the soup. Cut in half lengthwise, and then cut across into ¼ inch slices. Rinse in a colander in plenty of cold running water.
2. PEEL THE ONION and cut into slices about the same thickness as the leeks. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat until foaming, then add leeks and onion.
3. STIR TO COAT the vegetables in butter. Cover and cook over medium heat for about 10 minutes, or until soft but not brown, stirring occasionally.
4. WHILE THE LEEKS and onion are cooking, peel the potatoes and cut into ¼ inch slices. When the leeks and onion are ready add the potato slices to the pan.
5. AS SOON AS you have added the potatoes, pour in the stock, then add salt and pepper. Don't add too much salt because the stock may already contain some.
6. ADD AROUND 8 gratings of nutmeg, turn up the heat, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for about 10 minutes, or until vegetables are soft.
7. REMOVE THE PAN from the heat. Using an electric handheld blender, with the blades held below the level of the soup, puree the soup for about 3 minutes, until smooth.
8. RETURN THE SOUP to medium heat and stir until it boils. Take off the heat, add the cream and lemon juice, then stir and check seasoning. Serve hot, sprinkled with parsley.