

Wild Mushroom Soup with Cheesy-Garlic Croutons

recipe by Jeff Baldwin

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 40 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

6 Tb unsalted butter

1 C chopped yellow onions

½ C chopped celery

¼ tsp cayenne

1 ½ tsp minced garlic

6 oz shiitake mushrooms, wiped clean, stems trimmed, and sliced

6 oz portabella mushrooms, wiped clean, stems trimmed, and sliced

8 oz cremini or button mushrooms, wiped clean, stems trimmed, and sliced

2 tsp fresh thyme leaves

1 tsp salt

½ tsp freshly ground black pepper

1/3 C brandy

6 C chicken stock

1 ½ C heavy cream

1 8-inch long thin baguette French bread, cut into ½-inch thick slices

3 cloves peeled, crushed garlic

2 Tb extra virgin olive oil

3 Tb finely grated Parmesan

In a large pot, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the onions, celery, and cayenne and cook, stirring, until soft, about 4 minutes. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Add the mushrooms, thyme, salt, and pepper, and cook, stirring, until the mushrooms give off their liquid and start to brown, about 7 minutes. Add the brandy, bring to a boil and cook until glazed, about 2 minutes. Add the stock and return to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer uncovered, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes.

Remove from the heat and puree with a hand-held immersion blender, or in batches in a food processor. Add the cream, return to a simmer, and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and adjust seasonings to taste.

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F. Rub both sides of the French bread slices with the crushed garlic and place on a baking sheet. With a pastry brush, brush one side with

the olive oil. Top with a fine sprinkling of the cheese and bake until the cheese is bubbly, about 5 minutes. Remove from the oven.

To serve, ladle the soup into bowls and top each serving with a few croutons.