

Potato Leek Soup

serves 8–10

This is as comforting, flavorful soup with a rich, complex flavor magically created out of very simple ingredients. It's always a favorite with my guests.

2 t. extra virgin olive oil	8-10 cups veg. stock (see pg.)
1 T. butter	1/4-1/2 c. heavy cream (optional)
1/2 c. onions, 1/2" dice	
1 1/2 c. leeks, washed, 1/8" slices	optional spinach coulis to swirl
1 T. dry sherry	into the soup:
1 carrot, thin quarter rounds	2 tsp. olive oil
6 medium potatoes, Yukon Gold or	2 cup fresh spinach leaves
flavorful heirloom variety,	1/4 cup parsley leaves
scrubbed, 3/4" cubes	1/4 tsp. salt
1 1/2 tsp. salt	2 T. heavy cream
1/2 tsp. black pepper	

Heat the oil and butter on medium-high heat in a 6–8 quart soup pot. Add the onions and leeks, and sauté, stirring often. Allow them to begin to stick a little bit, then drizzle in a bit of the sherry, 1/2 tsp. at a time, to release the stuck bits into the soup. This will give a wonderful, rich flavor. When they are light brown, about 15–20 minutes, add the carrot, potato, salt, pepper, and 6 cups of the stock. Stir well. Add enough additional stock to cover the contents by 1–2 inches. Bring to a boil, lower the heat to medium, and stir occasionally. Thin with additional stock if necessary. Cook for 45 minutes to an hour, until the potatoes are fully softened. Taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking. Add the cream if desired.

You can serve the soup as is or you can pureé it and serve it with a swirl of spinach coulis (pureé) (or arugula or watercress or ...). To prepare the coulis, heat the olive oil in a medium fry pan on medium-high heat. Add the spinach and parsley and sauté until the spinach wilts, 4–5 minutes. Add the salt and cream. Pureé in a blender until completely smooth, thinning with stock if needed to make a medium-thick pureé. Scrape into a bowl. Set aside. Then pureé the soup in small batches in a food processor or blender, thinning with additional stock if the soup is too thick to blend, or blend right in the pot with an immersion blender. To serve, ladle the soup into each bowl and spoon a big dollop of the coulis into the center. Place the tip of a knife into the center of the dollop, and pull outward toward the edge of the bowl, creating a ray. Repeat that several times, pulling the knife to a different spot of the bowl, creating a series of "sun rays."

Serve with a salad, your favorite bread or rolls, and a protein-rich side dish for a complete and nourishing meal. Celebrate the simple pleasures of life.