

AUTUMN SOUPS and TACOS

with Lucy Van Horn & the Jericho Public Library

I make chicken stock once a month and freeze in containers so that I have them ready for soups. Even half fresh and half store bought makes a difference.

PESTO SOUP

1/4 cup olive oil - plus 2 tbs olive oil
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 small zucchini (12 oz.) diced
1/2 cup risotto rice
5 cups hot chicken stock
1 cup packed basil leaves
1/4 cup pine nuts
1 clove garlic
1/4 teas salt
1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese, fresh

Heat 2 tbs olive oil and saute onion and zucchini until softened. Stir in rice and coat grains with oil. Pour hot stock into pot over rice and bring to a boil. Simmer 10 minutes or until rice is tender. Season with salt and pepper. Meanwhile, prepare pesto in processor by first adding oil then adding basil leaves, pine nuts, garlic and salt and pulsing to blend into puree. Add cheese at the end.

Once the rice is tender stir in 2 heaping tbs pesto puree into soup. Taste and decide if you want more. Then save the remaining pesto for another use. (such as over pasta or in sauce for chicken or fish) Serve and garnish soup with croutons.

SEAFOOD BISQUE

1 lb shrimp, remove shells and set them aside
2 1/2 cups water
2 bay leaves
1/2 teas thyme
3 tbs butter
3/4 cup onion, chopped
3/4 lb crab legs (imitation OK)
1 cup chicken stock
2 cups half and half (or light cream)
2 tsp salt
1 tsp white pepper
3/4 cup dry sherry
1/3 cup flour
tabasco sauce
parsley, cut into small sprigs

Refrigerate shrimp meat. Place shrimp shells only, water, bay leaves and thyme in medium sized pot and bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer the shells partially covered for 30 minutes. You should have about 2 cups liquid left for use in soup. Strain carefully to remove all shells.

Melt butter and add onion. Cook for 2 to 3 min. Add sea legs and continue to cook for another 2 minutes. Combine chicken stock and cream and stir into crab meat mixture. Add strained shrimp stock, salt and pepper. In a small bowl combine 1/2 cup sherry with the flour and mix well. Slowly add to the crab mixture while stirring constantly and bring to a boil. Add shrimp. Lower temperature and simmer for 15 minutes. Add a few dashes of tabasco sauce to taste. Just before serving sprinkle each bowl with parsley.

LEMON ORZO SOUP

1 quart of chicken stock
1/4 cup of chopped dill
1 cup orzo
1/4 cup lemon juice
2 tbs cornstarch
salt and white pepper to taste

Place chicken stock in heavy bottom pot and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer stock for about 2 minutes. Add orzo and cook an additional 10 minutes. Add chopped dill and cook 5 minutes while you mix cornstarch with lemon juice, add to soup mixture and simmer. Do not allow soup to come to a boil. Season with salt and pepper. If you want a heavier and more filling soup add some cooked shredded chicken meat at the same time you add dill.

SIMPLE TACOS – I use tacos in various sizes for side dishes to accompany a soup or a salad. They are also great for quick and delicious desserts. I prefer Flour or whole wheat. The small Street Taco is sometimes hard to find but keep some in your refrig for a quick small treat

TACOS FOR YOUR SOUP

1 fajita taco (or larger) for each soup being served
grated cheese such as 4 Cheese Mexican by Sargento (or one you really love)
1 avocado, peeled and sliced thin
1 tomato, sliced thin
green leaves of cilantro, parsley, watercress or your choice
2 – 4 tablespoon canola oil
salt

Preheat your oven to warm and have a paper towel lined serving dish ready. Wash the green leaves, dry with a paper towel and set aside. Slice avocado and tomato and set aside on paper towel. Your cheese should not be ice cold, so take it out ahead of time and set aside.

In a frying pan heat 2 tbs oil and lower heat to medium. Slide the taco into oil and fry on one side and fold the taco in half so that the cooked side is on the inside. Remove from oil, fill with cheese, a slice of avocado, some tomato and

a few green leaves. Top with a bit more cheese, close and gently press down with spatula. Fry both sides and remove to plate and keep warm in oven as you make others. The additional 2 tbs of oil will be added to your pan as needed to fry the tacos. Watch the heat in pan as you do not want to burn your tacos. Depending on the soup you are making you can also add some cooked and shredded chicken, pork or beef. This will require a larger shell. These should also be made and served the same day.

DESSERT

For a really quick dessert, use a small taco. Gently fry on both sides and slide onto paper towel. Sprinkle gently with some cinnamon and place on flat dish. Top with vanilla, chocolate or coffee ice cream. Once again sprinkle just a bit of cinnamon over the ice cream. A second taco can be fried at the same time, cut up and used for decoration.

You can also make fruit filled tacos...toss cut up fruit with warm melted jelly and a pinch of cinnamon or cardamom. Serve over a fried flat taco with some whipped cream that has been beaten with ½ teas vanilla.