

CHEESY BROCCOLI & BACON SOUP

F EASY

Last Modified: 02/10/2018

PREP: 25 Min
COOK: 1 Hr 20 Min
STOVETOP

SOUP-VEGETABLE

MAKES 8 SERVINGS

QUA	MEASURE	INGREDIENT	PROCESS
1/2	Pound	Thick Sliced Bacon	1/4" Lardons
2	Medium	Yellow Onions	Diced
5	Cups	Fresh Broccoli Florets	Trimmed
OR			
2	Pounds	Frozen Broccoli Florets	Thawed
1	Cup	Carrots	Diced
3	Stalks	Celery	Thin Sliced
1	Clove	Garlic	Minced
1	Tbsp	Dijon Mustard (Grey Poupon)	
2	Pounds	Starchy Potatoes (Idaho / Russet)	1" Pieces
3	Tbsp	Unsalted Butter	
1/2	Cup	All Purpose Flour	
3	Cups	Half & Half	
2	14 1/2 Oz	Cans Chicken Stock (Swanson)	
2	Whole	Bay Leaves	
2	Pounds	Sharp Cheddar Cheese	Shredded
1 +/-	Pinches	Kosher Salt	To Taste
1 +/-	Pinches	Ground White Pepper	To Taste

BEER VERSION

1	12 Oz	Bottle Dark Beer (Amber Bock) (NOT Guinness Stout)	WILL darken the Soup
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OPTIONAL TOPPINGS

		Crumbled Bacon	
		Sharp Cheddar Cheese	Shredded
		Crispy Fried Onions (French's)	
		Soup Crackers	
		Green Onions (Greens Only)	Thin Sliced
		Fresh Italian Flat Leaf Parsley Leaves	Chopped

PREPARATION

FACTOID	This creamy, thick, luscious, decadent comfort food is among my all-time FAVORITE Soups. We make it often as our dish-to-pass at winter Sunday football watching parties with friends. Having ALL of the Optional Toppings at hand makes this into Loaded Baked Potato Soup.
OPTION	This is a creamy Soup. We use White Pepper to keep the Soup White. If you don't care about a few black spots (or are adding in the Beer), use fine ground Black Pepper

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OPTION	If desired, you may substitute Whole Milk for the Half & Half here in order to reduce the overall Fat content. However; reducing the Fat any further than that, say by substituting 2% Milk, etc. will make the Soup VERY bland tasting. This is after all, supposed to be a "feel good" home cooked comfort Soup. Thickening the Milk WILL be more difficult.
TOOLS	1) Large Mixing Bowl 2) Large Stock Pot & Lid
PREP	DISH 1) Cut the nearly frozen Bacon slices into 1/4" Lardons & set it aside. 2) Dice the Yellow Onions and set them aside. 3) Dice the Carrots and add them on top of the Onions. 4) Thinly slice the Celery and add it on top of the Onions. 5) Mince the Garlic Cloves and set it aside. 6) Cut the Broccoli into Florets and set them aside. 7) Shred the Cheddar Cheese and set it aside. 8) Peel & cut the Potatoes into 1" chunks, submerge them in water until ready to use.
1	BACON: In a large stock pot over medium high heat, saute the Bacon until the fat has been rendered. Remove the Bacon, leaving behind ALL of the rendered Bacon Grease for the Roux.
2	MIREPOIX: Reduce the heat to medium, add in the Onions, Carrots and Celery and saute them until the Onions are transparent (do NOT allow the Onions to brown), about 5 minutes. Stir in the Garlic and stir-fry until it is fragrant, about 2 minutes more.
3	ROUX: Sprinkle the Flour over the top of the Onion Mixture and saute it while stirring to make a Roux (thick paste) - cook the mixture, stirring often (no white visible) for at least 3 minutes to get rid of the Flour taste. Add in the Chicken Stock and Beer (if using), to deglaze the pan. Bring it to a boil while stirring and scraping. Boil it for 30 minutes and then reduce the heat to a simmer.
4	SOUP: Add in the Bay Leaves, Dijon Mustard and Half & Half and simmer it for a minimum of 15 minutes.
5	SOUP: Stir in the Broccoli and simmer until they are bright green, about 5 minutes, Stir in the drained Potatoes and simmer covered until the Potatoes are fork tender, about 15 minutes. Uncover, remove and discard the Bay Leaves. Stir in the Cheese a handful at a time until it's fully melted. Salt and Pepper the Soup to taste.
NOTE	If the Soup is too runny, use a potato masher to crush some of the Potatoes to thicken it.
SERVE	Ladle the Soup into warm bowls and sprinkle the top with any optional toppings you like - Serve immediately with some nice thick sliced Crusty Bread, or Biscuits.
NOTE	This Soup freezes and reheats extremely well. Store it in sealed quart containers for up to 6 months in the freezer. Thaw completely prior to re-heating.