

Cauliflower Cheddar Soup adapted from Fine Cooking

1 small head cauliflower (about 1 lb.), cored and cut into 1-1/2-inch florets
2 Tbs. butter
1 medium yellow onion, small diced
1 medium clove garlic, minced
2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/8 tsp. cayenne
2 cups organic chicken broth
1/2 cup heavy cream or whole milk
1/4 tsp. thyme
4 cups grated sharp or extra-sharp white Cheddar (about 14 oz.)
Freshly ground black pepper

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Boil the cauliflower until tender, about 4 minutes. Drain and let cool slightly. Trim the stems from 18 of the cauliflower pieces and cut the crowns into mini florets about 1/2 inch wide; set aside. Reserve the trimmed stems with the remaining larger pieces.

Melt the butter in a 4-quart saucepan over medium-low heat. Add the onion and 1/4 tsp. salt and cook, stirring frequently, until soft, 10 to 12 minutes.

Add the garlic and cook until the aroma subsides, 2 to 3 minutes. Increase the heat to medium, add the flour, nutmeg, and cayenne and cook for 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Whisk in the broth, cream/milk, and 2 cups water. Add the thyme and bring to a simmer. Stir in the cheese until melted and simmer for 5 minutes to develop the flavors.

Stir in the larger cauliflower pieces and reserved stems. Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender. Return the soup to the pot, season with salt and black pepper to taste. Add the mini cauliflower florets and reheat gently before serving.

Serves 6 - 8 and is best with some crusty bread.

*I've made this pureeing the soup and keeping it chunky. I prefer the chunky version just mashing it with a potato masher.