

Basic Chowder

Servings: 4 - 6

Ingredients

2 - 4 slices good local bacon (you can swap this out for about ½ teaspoon of smoked paprika if you don't eat bacon)
1 large yellow onion, chopped
3 large carrots, chopped
3 large potatoes, peeled and chopped (any kind will do, but I like yukon gold)
2 garlic cloves, minced
Small bundle (about 6 stems) fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 large bay leaf
⅓ cup dry white wine
Drizzle of extra virgin olive oil
6 tablespoons of butter
⅓ cup all purpose flour
6 cups stock (if you're making clam chowder with fresh or frozen clams, save and strain the cooking liquid)
About 1 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons each butter and extra virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper to taste
Your choice of variation (see below)
Chopped fresh herbs for garnish (optional)

Directions

1. Prepare all vegetables.
2. Warm oil in large pot (at least 6 quarts).
3. If using, cook the bacon on medium low until crispy.
4. Add chopped vegetables and garlic and saute on medium until translucent (about 5 minutes).
5. Add thyme, bay, and other seasonings (depending on your variation) and saute until fragrant.
6. Add the butter to the pot.
7. When the butter is melted, sprinkle the flour in, stir until absorbed into the butter, and saute for about 1 minute.
8. Deglaze the pot with the wine and allow to cook for 1 - 2 minutes.

9. Add stock, bring to a simmer, and cook for 15 - 20 minutes or until vegetables are soft and soup is thickened.
10. Add first variation ingredient (clams, corn, etc.) and simmer for an additional 5 - 10 minutes.
11. Stir in heavy cream, and season to taste with salt, pepper, and nutmeg.
12. Garnish with chopped fresh parsley and enjoy!

Variations

For clam or fish chowder, add -

- At least 1 cup cooked chopped clams or cooked flaked fish
 - I use local razor clams which can be tough if not properly cooked. To get tender clams and awesome stock for the soup, simmer your cleaned clams in about 1 cup wine and 6 - 8 cups water with aromatics (carrot, onion, garlic, herbs, etc. for about 1 ½ hours. Then cool and chop clams and reserve cooking liquid for chowder. Be sure to either strain through cheesecloth or let any residual grit settle to the bottom of your container.
- ½ teaspoon dried dill

For corn chowder, add -

- 1 cup fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped (swap for carrots)
- Generous pinch of saffron threads
- ½ teaspoon mild chili powder

For lobster or crab chowder, add -

- ¾ cup cooked lobster or crab meat
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon (stir in towards the end)
- ⅓ cup dry sherry (swap for white wine)
- 1 large fresh tomato, seeded and chopped