



Pumpkin Bisque with Cranberry-Walnut Compote

Ingredients

Serves 6

4 lbs cheese pumpkin, seeded, peeled, and quartered

8 Tbsp (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened at room temperature

Kosher salt

White pepper (in a mill)

¼ cup Spanish onion, medium diced

2 Tbsp celery, medium diced

4 cups homemade vegetable stock or low-sodium, store-bought vegetable broth or water

2 Tbsp mascarpone cheese or ¼ cup heavy cream

½ cup canned pumpkin puree

2 Tbsp finely diced shallots

Several Tbsp white meat chicken stock, if needed (optional)

Pinch of ground nutmeg

1 tsp finely grated orange zest

Cranberry-Walnut Compote (recipe below)

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Put the pumpkin quarters in a bowl. Add 3 Tbsp of the softened butter, season with salt and pepper, and toss to coat the pumpkin. Spread the quarters out on a rimmed cookie sheet or baking sheet. Roast until tender to a fork-tip, about 50 minutes to 1 hour.

Remove from the oven and, when cool enough to handle, scoop out the flesh. You should have approximately 3 cups of roasted pumpkin.

Put 3 Tbsp butter into a large, heavy-bottomed pot and warm it over low heat. Add the onion, celery, and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened but not browned, approximately 20 minutes. Pour in the stock and add the roasted pumpkin. Bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Whisk in the mascarpone and pumpkin puree.

Warm 2 Tbsp of butter over medium-low heat in a medium, heavy-bottomed sauté pan. Add the shallots and sauté for 3 minutes. Season with salt and 3 grinds of white pepper (or to taste). Set aside, covered, to keep warm.

Working in batches, ladle the soup in a blender and puree until velvety smooth. Season to taste with salt. Continue to blend until smooth. Strain the soup through a fine-mesh strainer set over a bowl. Add the nutmeg, orange zest, and 3 grinds of white pepper to the soup.

To Serve

Divide the soup among 6 wide, shallow bowls. Garnish each serving with 1 heaping Tbsp of Cranberry-Walnut Compote (recipe below) if desired, and serve.

Prep Tip

If desired, melt 2 Tbsp butter over medium-high heat in a saucepan and let cook until the butter turns brown. Add it to the soup while blending one batch (see step 9).

Cranberry-Walnut Compote

Ingredients

Makes 1 cup

2 Tbsp unsalted butter

1 ½ cups fresh cranberries

½ cup plus 2 Tbsp granulated sugar

2 tsp grated orange zest

2 Tbsp Grand Marnier (optional)

Pinch of cinnamon

1 tsp grated fresh ginger

¼ cup walnuts, toasted, coarsely chopped

Preparation

Melt the butter over low heat in a heavy-bottomed sauté pan. Stir in the cranberries, sugar, orange zest, Grand Marnier (if using), cinnamon, and ginger.

Cook, stirring occasionally, until the cranberries begin to burst, approximately 6 minutes. The mixture will be bubbling and foamy. Continue to cook for another 3 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and let cool. The compote can be covered and refrigerated for up to 1 week.