

## Chestnut Soup

This is a delicious period dish that is still eaten in France. It is easier to buy roasted chestnuts in a jar or frozen than it is to roast and peel fresh chestnuts.

For the soup:

2 TBS butter

1 medium onion chopped

1 stalk celery chopped

1 medium carrot chopped

1 clove garlic chopped

Salt

4 cups chicken broth

1 bay leaf

1 15 oz. jar roasted chestnuts

½ cup heavy cream

1 TBS dry sherry

For the toppings:

3 TBS butter

2 cups rustic bread cubed with crusts removed

Vegetable oil for frying

4 cups loosely packed fresh parsley sprigs

Salt

Make the soup:

Melt the butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, celery, carrot, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon salt; cook, stirring, until soft, about 8 minutes. Add the chicken broth, 2 cups water and the bay leaf. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium low and simmer 5 minutes. Chop the chestnuts, add to the pan and simmer until the chestnuts and vegetables are tender, about 10 more minutes.

Remove the bay leaf.

Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into another saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Add the cream, sherry, and salt to taste. Keep warm.

Make the toppings:

For the croutons: melt the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat. Add the bread and cook, stirring, until golden, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a bowl.

Fry the parsley:

Heat 1 inch of vegetable oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat until a deep-fry thermometer registers 350 degrees F. Fry in batches until crisp, about 30 seconds. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with salt. (The toppings can be made up to 3 hours ahead.)

Ladle the soup into bowls and top with the croutons and fried parsley.

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