

Corn Chowder with Bacon and Thyme

From Relax, Company's Coming by Kathy Gunst (Simon and Schuster, 2001)

Ingredients:

6 strips bacon
1 teaspoon butter
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1 yellow, green or red bell pepper, finely chopped
1 ½ tablespoons fresh thyme, chopped
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
3 medium potatoes, peeled and almost finely chopped
6 ears corn
4 cups milk
Dash hot pepper sauce
½ cup heavy cream

Garnishes:

Sweet paprika and 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme

In a large soup pot cook the bacon over moderately low heat until crisp on both sides. Remove and drain on paper towels. Remove all but 1 teaspoon of the bacon fat and heat with the butter over low heat. Add the onion and cook 5 minutes, stirring. Add the pepper, thyme, salt and pepper and cook another 3 minutes. Add the potatoes and cook another 3 minutes.

Meanwhile husk the corn and remove the silk. Using a sharp knife remove the kernels from the cob. Add the corn to the pot with the potatoes; don't throw away the cobs.

Crumble one piece of bacon and add to the pot along with the milk. Bring to a simmer over moderate heat. Add the corn cobs (they will infuse the soup with more corn flavor). Reduce the heat to low, season with salt and hot pepper sauce, and simmer covered for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender. Remove the corn cobs and serve hot topped with the remaining bacon (crumbled), paprika and thyme.

Serves: 6