

## CURRIED PUMPKIN SOUP

SERVES 10 TO 12

Active time: 20 min Start to finish: 50 min

*The flavor combinations in this creamy yet light soup are complex, but making it is very easy. Like the best appetizers, the soup wakes up the palate and is not too filling.*

**2** medium onions, finely chopped (2 cups)  
**2** tablespoons unsalted butter  
**2** large garlic cloves, minced  
**1½** tablespoons minced peeled fresh ginger  
**2** teaspoons ground cumin  
**1** teaspoon ground coriander  
**½** teaspoon ground cardamom  
**1½** teaspoons salt  
**¾** teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes  
**2** (15-oz) cans solid-pack pumpkin (3½ cups; not pie filling)  
**7** cups water  
**1½** cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (12 fl oz)  
**1** (14-oz) can unsweetened coconut milk (not low-fat)  
**¼** cup olive oil  
**2** teaspoons brown mustard seeds  
**8** fresh curry leaves

► Cook onions in butter in a wide 6-quart heavy pot over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Add cumin, coriander, and cardamom and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Stir in salt, red pepper flakes, pumpkin, water, broth, and coconut milk and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, 30 minutes. Purée

soup in batches in a blender until smooth (use caution when blending hot liquids), transferring to a large bowl, and return soup to pot. Keep soup warm over low heat.

► Heat oil in a small heavy skillet over moderately high heat until hot but not smoking, then cook mustard seeds until they begin to pop, about 15 seconds. Add curry leaves and cook 5 seconds, then pour mixture into pumpkin soup. Stir until combined well and season soup with salt. Soup can be thinned with additional water.

Cooks' note:

**Soup can be made 1 day ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered.**

## LOUISIANA SHRIMP RICE DRESSING

SERVES 8 TO 10

Active time: 45 min Start to finish: 1½ hr

*Our resident Louisianian, associate food editor Alexis Touchet, remembers this dressing from her childhood—and it's the one that still graces her family's Thanksgiving meal, year after year. This dressing is not considered a stuffing for the turkey, but a dish that "dresses up" the table.*

**3½** cups water  
**2** teaspoons salt  
**2** cups long-grain white rice  
**2** medium onions, chopped  
**2** celery ribs, chopped  
**1** medium green bell pepper, chopped  
**2** tablespoons vegetable oil  
**2** tablespoons unsalted butter  
**2** large garlic cloves, finely chopped

**2** (28-oz) cans whole tomatoes in juice

**1** cup water

**½** teaspoon cayenne

**1½** lb large shrimp (21 to 25 per lb), peeled, deveined, and cut crosswise into **½**-inch pieces

**1** cup thinly sliced scallion greens (from 1 bunch)

► Bring water and **½** teaspoon salt to a boil over high heat in a 4-quart heavy pot, then stir in rice. Cover pot, then reduce heat to low and cook until liquid is absorbed and rice is tender, about 15 minutes. Remove pot from heat and let stand, covered, 5 minutes. Fluff rice with a fork, then keep covered.

► While rice is cooking, cook onions, celery, and bell pepper in oil and butter in a wide 8-quart heavy pot over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until pepper is softened, 10 to 12 minutes. Add garlic, tomatoes with juice, water, cayenne, and remaining **½** teaspoons salt and simmer, uncovered, breaking up tomatoes with wooden spatula and stirring frequently to prevent scorching, until very thick, 45 to 50 minutes. Add shrimp and simmer, stirring frequently, until just cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes. Add scallion greens and rice and stir until combined well, then season with salt if desired.

Cooks' note:

Rice and tomato sauce, without shrimp and scallions, can be made 3 days ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled separately in airtight containers. Reheat rice in a colander or large sieve set over a pot of boiling water, covered with a dampened paper towel. Reheat sauce in pot before proceeding.

**Fresh curry leaves add depth to this intense soup with traces of ginger, cardamom, and coriander—and mustard seeds that pop in the mouth.**

