

Celery Root Soup With Chestnut Puree

Serves 6-8

This is a variation of a recipe I learned while working at Gramercy Tavern in New York. I was always shocked at how easy it was to make, and how little cream it took to make the soup silky. A drizzle of savory chestnut puree adds a depth of flavor, but you can top with some crumbled roasted chestnuts instead. The soup can be made up to three days ahead. Reheat and garnish before serving.

- 2 cardamom pods
- 1 teaspoon coriander seed
- 1 piece star anise
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, peeled and thinly sliced (about 2 cups)
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced (about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- 2 leeks, pale green and white parts only, washed and thinly sliced (about 1 cup)
- 2 stalks celery, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 5 pounds celery root, peeled and roughly cut into a small dice
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup whole milk

Chestnut puree (see accompanying recipe), for garnish

About 1 teaspoon roasted salted pumpkin seeds, for garnish

Instructions: Lightly toast the cardamom, coriander and star anise in a small saucepan until fragrant. Remove from the pan and place on a large square of cheese cloth. Add the cinnamon stick, then wrap the contents into a sachet and tie with twine. Set aside.

Heat the butter in a medium-sized stock pot over medium heat. Add the onion, shallots, leeks, celery, a few pinches of salt and a few turns of pepper, and saute until the onion is translucent but with no color, about 15 minutes.

Add the celery root and saute until it begins to soften, another 15-20 minutes. The smaller you cut the celery root, the quicker it will soften.

Add the chicken broth and

sachet and bring to a boil. Lower heat to a simmer, cover and cook, checking and stirring every few minutes until the celery root is tender and falls apart when cut with a spoon, about 30 minutes.

Remove from heat. Discard the sachet, cool the mixture slightly, and add the cream and milk.

Working in batches, puree the mixture. Pour the puree through a fine mesh strainer set over the stockpot, using the back of a wooden spoon to help push the liquid through. Taste for seasoning. If making ahead, cool and refrigerate for up to 3 days. Reheat gently before serving.

Serve garnished with a dollop of chestnut puree and a teaspoon of roasted pumpkin seeds.

Per serving: 178 calories, 7 g protein, 24 g carbohydrate, 8 g fat (5 g saturated), 25 mg cholesterol, 263 mg sodium, 4 g fiber.