

Smoky Cream of Broccoli Soup with Sharp Cheddar

*Sara Moulton
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Servings: 4

*2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
3/4 pound Canadian bacon, chopped
1 medium (1 cup) yellow onion, sliced
2 pounds fresh broccoli, set aside four cups of small florets, the rest, including the stalks, trimmed of tough skin and coarsely chopped
1 small (6 ounces) Yukon Gold potato, scrubbed and thinly sliced
5 cups low-sodium chicken broth
Kosher salt (to taste)
ground black pepper (to taste)
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (or to taste)
2 ounces sharp Cheddar cheese, coarsely grated*

Preparation Time: 45 minutes

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.

In a large saucepan over medium, heat one tablespoon of the oil. Add the bacon and cook, stirring, for 6 to 8 minutes or until slightly golden. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a bowl and set aside.

Reduce the heat to medium-low. Add another tablespoon of the oil and the onion to the pan. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened.

Add the coarsely chopped broccoli (not the florets), the potato and the chicken broth. Bring the broth to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, partially covered, for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until the broccoli and potatoes are very tender.

Meanwhile, on a rimmed baking sheet toss the florets with the remaining two teaspoons of oil. Season with salt and pepper and then spread in an even layer. Roast in the top third of the oven for 5 minutes or until lightly caramelized.

When the vegetables in the soup are tender, transfer the soup to a blender and puree', in batches, until smooth. Be careful and only fill the blender one-third full each time.

Return the soup to the saucepan along with the roasted broccoli florets and the Canadian bacon. Add the lemon juice and season with salt and pepper. Add water, if necessary, to achieve the desired texture.

Ladle the soup into four shallow soup bowls and top each portion with some of the cheddar.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 320 Calories; 15g Fat (33.7% calories from fat); 42g Protein; 22g Carbohydrate; 8g Dietary Fiber; 57mg Cholesterol; 1401mg Sodium. Exchanges: 4 1/2 Lean Meat; 2 1/2 Vegetable; 1/2 Fat.