

Curried Pumpkin Soup

Gourmet | November 2005

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.

Yield: Makes 10 to 12 servings

Active Time: 20 min

Total Time: 50 min

ingredients

2 medium onions, finely chopped (2 cups)
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 large garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 tablespoons minced peeled fresh ginger
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
3/4 teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes
2 (15-oz) cans solid-pack pumpkin (3 1/2 cups; not pie filling)
4 cups water
1 1/2 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth (12 fl oz)
1 (14-oz) can unsweetened coconut milk (not low-fat)
1/4 cup olive oil
2 teaspoons brown mustard seeds
8 fresh curry leaves

preparation

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.