
Life-Affirming Mushroom Soup

Ingredients:

Butter or olive oil

A large onion

A stalk of celery

A smallish carrot

12-16 oz mushrooms (I often use a mix for this recipe. Criminis, portabellas, white buttons, shitakes, porcinis and oysters will all work nicely.)

3-4 cloves of garlic

1 bay leaf

1 large pinch of herbes de Provence (maybe even 2 pinches) – If you don't have HdP, a mix of dried herbs will do: rosemary, lavender, fennel, marjoram, savory, oregano, tarragon, fennel, thyme, etc.

Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

3 cups chicken stock (beef, veal or vegetable stock will also work fine)

¼ cup heavy cream (optional, but you really should include it)

Toasted pine nuts or pumpkin seeds.

Directions:

- Clean and halve the mushrooms. (Quarter them if they're really big. Slice them if you're not going to puree the soup).
- Put a big, heavy pot over a medium light.
- Melt a good amount of butter or olive oil in the pot (don't be stingy—if some fat is good, more is better).
- Cut the carrot into ½ inch pieces and put it in the pot.
- Roughly chop the onion and celery and add them to the pot.
- When the vegetables are just starting to get soft, add the garlic.
- Wait a couple of minutes (don't let the garlic burn) and then add the mushrooms. Turn up the heat to medium high.
- Add the herbes de Provence, the bay leaf and S&P.
- When the mushrooms have given up most of their liquid and are starting to show a bit of color (about 10 minutes), add the stock.
- Bring to a boil, lower to a simmer, cover and let cook for about 30 minutes.
- Remove the bay leaf (this is important; bay leaves, while delicious, are a choking hazard).
- Puree to desired level of smoothness in a blender, a food processor or with an immersion blender. (Note—this step is optional. The soup is delicious unpureed as well.)
- Stir in the cream.
- Top with toasted pine nuts or pumpkin seeds and a drizzle of olive oil.