

RECIPES

Crema de Elote (Corn Soup)

This luscious soup is as elegant and satisfying as any from any other cuisine. It is perfect for anything from upscale entertaining to a weeknight supper.

Ingredients

Oil for deep frying

3 corn tortillas (red ones if possible) sliced into pieces 1/8 inch wide by 2 inches long

1 pound sweet frozen corn, thawed

1/3 cup chicken broth

4 tablespoons unsalted butter

3/4 cup chopped white onions

2 1/4 cups milk

3/4 cup whipping cream

1/4 cup roasted, peeled, seeded and chopped poblano chiles (to peel the chiles, char them over a gas burner or under a broiler, place them in a plastic bag for 20 minutes, then peel).

1/4 cup finely chopped tomato

1 teaspoon salt, or to taste

1/8 teaspoon white or black pepper

1 teaspoon cornstarch dissolved in 1 1/2 teaspoons water

1/2 cup crumbled Mexican queso fresco, or substitute Muenster

Four cilantro leaves

Directions

1. Prepare the tortilla garnish. Heat the oil to 350 degrees (or until bubbles immediately arise from the handle of a wooden spoon pushed into the bottom of pan in which to oil is heated). Add the tortilla pieces and fry until the bubbles subside and they are crisp. Drain on absorbent towels and reserve.

2. Puree the corn and onions. Reserve 1/4 cup of the corn and place the remainder in a blender and add the broth. Melt 1 tablespoon of the butter over medium heat, add the onions, and cook, stirring often until the onions are soft but not browned, 4 - 5 minutes. Add the onions to the blender and blend on high for 2 minutes. Strain the contents of the blender through the fine blade of a food mill or push through a strainer.

3. Prepare the soup. Melt the remaining 3 tablespoons butter in a 3 quart pot over medium heat, add the pureed corn and onions and cook, stirring almost constantly to keep the mixture from scorching, for five minutes. The corn will thicken considerably. Slowly stir in the milk and cream, then add the reserved poblano chiles, tomato, salt and pepper, and simmer the mixture over medium heat for 10 minutes, stirring often to keep it from sticking to the pot and scorching. Stir in the dissolved cornstarch and continue simmering the soup for 5 minutes.

4. Serve the soup. To serve the soup, ladle it into four bowls, and top with the cheese, reserved corn, tortilla chips, and cilantro leaves.

Makes 1 quart of this rich soup: serving 4 as a first course or two as a meal

