

Carabaccia (Tuscan Onion Soup)

I've wanted to make carabaccia ever since I found out it was the ancient ancestor of French onion soup. They say that when made with vegetable broth, it was the favorite soup of vegetarian Leonardo da Vinci. Now you can add these interesting facts to your dinner party conversation repertoire. As for the cinnamon, the safe bet is to not add any and live happily ever after. But in tiny amounts, it lends a mysterious, warming background note.

By **John Mitzewich** |

Prep Time: 20 mins

Cook Time: 1 hr 45 mins

Total Time: 2 hrs 5 mins

Servings: 6

Ingredients

Soup:

- 4 pounds red onions
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 3 leaves sage
- freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup finely ground almonds (Optional)
- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar, or to taste
- 5 cups beef broth, or more as needed

Toast:

- 3 thick slices Italian bread, halved
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, or to taste, divided
- 3 leaves sage, or to taste, sliced into thin strips
- 3 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, or to taste, divided

Directions

Step 1

Make the soup: Peel onions and cut in half. Cut along the grain lengthwise into thin slices.

Step 2

Heat oil in a very large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onions and kosher salt. Cook and stir until starting to turn translucent, 5 to 7 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until very soft and sweet, about 1 hour.

Step 3

Add sage leaves, pepper, cinnamon, and almonds to the onions. Cook and stir until fragrant, 3 to 5 minutes. Transfer mixture to a soup pot. Pour in vinegar and broth and bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer until flavors blend, about 30 minutes.

Step 4

When the soup is almost finished, make the toast: Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Line a small baking sheet with aluminum foil.

Step 5

Place Italian bread onto the prepared baking sheet. Drizzle some olive oil over the bread; sprinkle sliced sage and some Parmesan cheese on top.

Step 6

Toast in the preheated oven until browned, about 15 minutes.

Step 7

Ladle soup into serving bowls and top each with a piece of toast. Drizzle remaining olive oil over the toast and sprinkle remaining Parmesan cheese on top. Dunk toast into the soup and let soak for a few minutes before serving.

Chef's Notes:

If you want to cut down on stirring, you can bake the onions in a roasting pan at 325 degrees F (165 degrees C), stirring a few times along the way. Take your time and wait until they are very soft.

You can also use chicken or vegetable broth, and you can substitute Pecorino cheese for Parmesan if desired.

While it is traditional to use cinnamon, many people don't enjoy the effect it has on the sweetness of the soup, so you may want to omit it or add an extremely small amount, and then adjust from there. If you don't add any to the pot, you can still experiment by adding a trace amount to a small sample cup, and see what you think.

Nutrition Facts

Per serving: 308 calories; total fat 15g; saturated fat 2g; cholesterol 2mg; sodium 1750mg; total carbohydrate 38g; dietary fiber 7g; total sugars 13g; protein 9g; vitamin c 23mg; calcium 144mg; iron 2mg; potassium 634mg