

Broccoli Soup with Toasted Brie 4-6 servings

- • 2 quarts low-salt chicken stock**, heated in microwave or on stove
- • 2 tablespoon olive oil
- • Crushed red pepper, fresh ground black pepper, and kosher salt
- • 2 garlic cloves (one left whole to flavor oil and one chopped for the soup)
- • 1 medium onion, peeled, trimmed, and cut into eighths
- • 3 stalks celery, trimmed, and cut into 2" pieces
- • 2 carrots, trimmed, and cut into 1" pieces
- • ½ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley
- • 1½ teaspoon herbes de Provence (or a mix of dried basil, thyme and rosemary)
- • 5 cups fresh broccoli, trimmed well, and chopped finely*
- • Hot sauce, 4-6 drops, or to taste
- • Zest and juice of one lemon
- • 6 1-oz slices of Brie

1. Heat the chicken stock in the microwave or on the stove. (I like an 8-cup Pyrex measuring cup for the microwave.)
2. Place the chopped garlic clove, onion, celery, and carrots into a food processor fitted with a steel blade and pulse until chopped coarsely. (Or chop by hand.)
3. In an 8-qt stock pot over medium heat, sauté a pinch each of the pepper and salt along with the other whole garlic clove for one minute. Add the chopped vegetables, stir, and cook covered about five minutes until beginning to soften.
4. Meantime, preheat the oven broiler.
5. Add the broccoli, hot stock, hot sauce, ½ t each kosher salt and fresh ground pepper, and lemon zest and juice to the stockpot. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat a bit, cover, and cook until broccoli is tender, about 10 minutes. Stir once or twice. Using an immersion blender (or process in batches in food processor), puree the soup. Taste and adjust seasonings.
6. Ladle soup into broiler-safe bowls and top each with a piece of Brie cheese. Place bowls on baking sheet about 4 inches under broiler and broil 3-5 minutes or until cheese is lightly browned. *(You could also bake this soup at 350 degrees F for several minutes if you do not have broiler-safe bowls. Alternately, simply place the cheese in the bottom of the bowl, ladle soup on top, and let sit a couple of minutes to melt cheese.)*
7. Serve hot or let cool, chill covered in refrigerator, and serve cold with a surprise small spoonful of peppered plain Greek yogurt hidden in the middle of each bowl.

*You could also use leftover cooked broccoli here to hasten cooking.
**Use vegetable stock for vegetarian option

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