

A Sutherland Belle

Jalapeño Corn Chowder

INGREDIENTS

- 6 oz (6 slices) bacon, chopped (2 pieces reserved for garnish)
- 1 large onion, finely diced (1 1/2 cups)
- 3 stalks celery, finely diced (1 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup butter
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 lb. Yukon potatoes, 3 medium, peeled and cut into 1/4" thick cubes
- 4 cups corn kernels (from 4-5 ears corn or 2 (15-ounce) cans yellow corn, drained) *
- 2 jalapeños, finely diced
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2-3 teaspoons sea salt, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon fresh cracked black pepper
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 6 ounces pepper jack cheese, grated
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- garnish with fresh cilantro, jalapeños, and reserved bacon

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place a 5-quart Dutch oven over medium/high heat. Add chopped bacon and cook stirring occasionally until browned. Remove bacon bits with a slotted spoon and set aside
2. To the same pot, add chopped onion and celery to the bacon fat and cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft (7-8 min). Add garlic and cook for 1 minute.
3. Melt the butter in the pan and sprinkle with flour. Stir or whisk to combine until vegetables are coated. Cook for a few minutes to get rid of the raw flour taste.
4. Add broth, milk, potatoes, jalapeños, corn, thyme, bay leaves, salt, pepper, paprika, and cayenne. Bring this to a boil, then reduce heat to a gentle simmer and cover. Cook for 10-15 minutes or until potatoes are tender but not mushy, stirring occasionally so nothing sticks to the bottom of your pot.
5. Remove thyme and bay leaves from the pot. Ladle 3 cups of the soup out of the pot and transfer to a high-powered blender. Blend until smooth and add back into the soup. Allow soup to come back to a simmer.
6. Add cheese and heavy cream to the pot, stirring to melt the cheese. Once melted, add bacon (remember to reserve some for garnish). Taste and adjust seasonings, if necessary.

Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with bacon, cilantro, and jalapeños. *Cook an additional 1/4 cup corn kernels in a skillet with oil for a crispy garnish.