Beer & Cheddar Soup

source: Jonathon's Oak Cliff courtesy of Food & Wine | Serves: 6
Make Ahead: The soup can be refrigerated overnight. Rewarm gently and thin with additional broth.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 Pound of bacon, sliced 1/3" thick and cut into 1/3" dice
1 Celery rib, finely chopped
1 Small onion, finely chopped
1 Large jalapeno, seeded and chopped
2 Large garlic cloves, minced
1 Tablespoon of chopped thyme
1 (12-ounce) Bottle of lager or pilsner
2 and 1/4 Cups of low-sodium chicken broth
4 Tablespoons of unsalted butter
1/4 Cup of all-purpose flour
1 Cup of heavy cream
1/2 Pound of sharp yellow cheddar cheese, coarsely shredded
4 Ounces of smoked cheddar cheese, coarsely shredded
Salt and freshly ground pepper

For serving: garlic-rubbed toasts

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large saucepan over moderate heat, cook bacon until the fat is rendered and the bacon crisp (about 7 minutes). Use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon to a bowl, leaving the delicious drippings behind.

2. To saucepan, add celery, onion, jalapeno, garlic and thyme and cook until softened, stirring often (about 8 minutes).

3. Add half of the beer and cook until reduced by half (5 minutes).

4. Add 2 and 1/4 cups of chicken broth and bring to a simmer.

5. Meanwhile, in a small skillet, melt the butter. Add flour and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until lightly browned (about 2 minutes).

Beer & Cheddar Soup (cont.)

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DIRECTIONS

6. Whisk the butter-flour (roux) into the soup until incorporated and bring back to a simmer. Cook until thickened (about 8 minutes).

7. Add the heavy cream, cheddar cheeses and remaining beer and simmer, stirring every once in a while, until the soup is thick and creamy (about 5 minutes).

8. Stir in the bacon and season to taste with salt and pepper. (Add tablespoons of broth if soup is too thick).