

# Food

THE BOSTON GLOBE • WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18, 1998



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JOHN BLANDINO

New England Soup Factory makes a spinach-zucchini bisque.

## Creamy and intense, bisques are soup stars

By Jean Kresay  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**M**aking soup is a labor of love for Marjorie Draker. With her husband, Paul Brophy, Draker owns New England Soup Factory, a restaurant and takeout shop in Brookline. They employ a pastry chef and a crew of cooks to make salads, sandwiches, and main dishes, but Draker makes all the soups. "It's what I do," she says modestly.

Eight kinds of soup are offered daily, and if the shop runs out, 100 gallons are on standby in the fridge. Draker, who created all the recipes, knows them so

well she doesn't bother to write them down.

"This is my file cabinet," she says, tipping her head. "The recipes come from everywhere — from foods I have eaten, and from lots of books."

Into the 40-gallon industrial soup pots that are bolted to the floor, Draker adds vegetables, 10 pounds at a time. She tastes as she cooks: soy is added for color and salt, balsamic vinegar for depth and sharpness, sesame oil to smooth things out.

Draker, 33, made her first pot of soup, giddle noodles with Hebrew alphabets, when she was a little girl, and she has known for years that she wanted to sell soup. "It was my dream," she says.

BISQUE, Page E4

### ■ BISQUE

Continued from Page E1

She compares soup to ice cream. "Chicken soup is a vanilla cone, chowder is a double scoop, chili is a sundae, and bisques," she swoons, "are banana splits, they're stars."

"Bisques are fun to make," says Bob Calderone, who always likes to have a bisque on the menu at Anago, in the Lenox Hotel, where he is chef-owner. Calderone's bisques are essentially vegetable or lentil purees thinned with stock or water and a little cream. The ingredients are selected with care.

"Use a light chicken stock," he advises. "A strong flavored stock will detract from the vegetable's flavor."

The first bisques, probably named after Biscay on the northern coast of Spain, were more complicated than they are now. Made with either meat or game, such as pigeon or quail, the meat was boiled with bread and spices, and the panned part that sank to the bottom of the plate was called the bisque.

Shellfish bisques, with their shells pulverized and strained to make the stock, came later. Today's cooks simply define a bisque as a thick, intensely flavored, pureed soup.

"One sip makes you feel perfect," says Draker.



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JOHN BLANDINO

Marjorie Draker has been stirring soup since she was a little girl.

### ANAGO'S LENTIL BISQUE

Blackened garlic, lentils, and pasta was one of Bob Calderone's favorite combinations when he was a boy. Calderone, chef-owner of Anago in the Lenox Hotel, now turns the combination into a bisque. Here is an adaptation of his recipe.

- 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 8 to 10 garlic cloves, crushed and peeled
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup dry white wine
- 1 cup lentils, rinsed and packed over
- 5 cups light chicken stock or water
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup heavy cream
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Chopped tomatoes and Italian parsley, optional garnish

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and cook, turning often, until charred, about 5 minutes. Put in the onion and cook for an additional 4 minutes or until lightly browned. Add the tomato paste and wine, and cook while stirring until the tomato paste dissolves and the wine bubbles. Add the lentils and chicken stock, and bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat and simmer gently for 45 minutes or until the lentils are tender. Add more stock or water to keep the lentils covered. Remove from the heat and, when cool enough to handle, puree in batches in a processor. Refrigerate overnight.

The next day, bring the soup to a gentle simmer. Stir in the cream and more stock or water if it is too thick and heat thoroughly. Season with salt and pepper, and garnish with chopped tomatoes and Italian parsley, if desired.

Makes about 6 cups.

### NEW ENGLAND SOUP FACTORY'S SPINACH AND ZUCCHINI BISQUE WITH ROASTED LEEKS

Marjorie Drucker, chef-owner of New England Soup Factory, is a master soup maker. Her talent for matching flavors is evident in this brilliantly colored fresh vegetable soup.

- 4 tablespoons salted butter
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups diced onion
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups diced celery
- 1 small fennel bulb, thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic
- 3 zucchini (about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$  pounds), cut in large chunks
- 2 large potatoes (about 1 pound), peeled and diced
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2 quarts firmly packed spinach leaves (about 1 pound)
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste
- Roasted leeks (see recipe below)

Melt the butter in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, celery, fennel, and garlic, and sauté 10 to 12 minutes or until the onion is softened. Add the zucchini and potatoes, and mix to combine. Add the stock and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes, until the vegetables are tender. Remove from the heat and add the spinach in batches, mixing with a large spoon after each addition until the spinach wilts. Puree in batches in a blender. To prevent splashing, remove the inner core of the blender cover and hold a kitchen towel over the top. Return the puree to the pot. Add the cream, nutmeg, salt, pepper, and roasted leeks, and heat thoroughly.

Makes about 14 cups.

For roasted leeks:

- 4 medium leeks, thinly sliced (about 3 cups)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. In a large bowl, combine the leeks, oil, salt, and pepper; toss gently. Spread in a roasting pan and roast for 20 minutes, stirring once or twice.

### PARSNIP AND CELERY BISQUE

- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1 cup diced onion
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups diced celery
- 3 cups thinly sliced parsnips (about 1 pound)
- 2 cups diced, peeled potatoes (about  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound)
- 6 cups chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish

Heat the butter in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and celery, and sauté until the onion is softened, about 5 minutes. Add the parsnips, potatoes, broth, thyme, salt, and pepper. Cover or bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Uncover and, when it is cool enough to handle, puree in batches in a processor.

Return the puree to the pot, stir in the cream and more broth if the soup is too thick, and heat thoroughly. Serve garnished with parsley.

Makes about 8 cups.

### TOMATO AND MUSHROOM BISQUE

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 Spanish onion, diced (about 2 cups)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup diced carrots
- 1 (12-ounce) package mushrooms, sliced (about 6 cups)
- 2 large garlic cloves, pressed
- 1 (14 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce) can dried tomatoes
- 3 cups chicken broth
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried oregano leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup heavy cream
- Chopped fresh cilantro, optional garnish

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and carrots, and sauté until the onion is softened, about 5 minutes. Add the mushrooms and garlic, and toss to combine. Cook, mixing often, until the mushrooms are softened, about 5 minutes. Add the undrained tomatoes, broth, oregano, salt, and pepper. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Uncover and, when cool enough to handle, puree in batches in a blender. Return the puree to the pot, stir in the cream, and heat thoroughly. Garnish with cilantro, if desired.

Makes about 6 cups.

### SHRIMP BISQUE

Shirley O. Corriher has managed to take the cream out of shrimp bisque but still produce a creamy soup. "The rich thickness is from the pureed rice and shrimp," writes Corriher in "CookWise" (Morrow, 1997).

- 1 tablespoon mild olive or vegetable oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped onion
- 1-inch piece of jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 2 teaspoons seafood-broil seasoning, such as Old Bay
- Salt to taste
- 5 cups water
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds shrimp in shells (any size)
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup rice
- 1 cup low-fat or skim milk
- 2 tablespoons dry sherry, optional

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion, jalapeño, and bay leaf, and sauté until the onion is softened, about 4 minutes. Stir in the thyme, seafood seasoning, and salt; cook 1 minute. Add the water, increase the heat, and bring to a rolling boil.

Add the shrimp. Start the timer and cook 3 to 4 minutes for small or medium shrimp and 5 minutes for large shrimp. With a slotted spoon, remove the shrimp to a strainer and rinse with cold water. Set aside.

Add rice to the shrimp's cooking water. Bring to a boil and stir. Then lower the heat, cover, and cook for 30 to 45 minutes or until the rice is very soft. Remove from the heat and discard the bay leaf. Meanwhile, peel and devein the shrimp, and place them in a food processor.

Add about 2 cups of the rice and cooking water, and puree. Transfer to a large bowl. Puree the remaining rice and cooking water. Return all the puree to the pot. Stir in the milk, adding more if necessary to make the desired consistency, and cook over low heat until hot. Stir in sherry, if desired.

Makes about 6 cups. ♣