

CREMA DE CILANTRO

CREAMY CILANTRO SOUP

Leek and potato soup is literally thousands of years old, but is a relatively recent addition to the Yucatecan table. And *vichyssoise* – a puréed and chilled version of the soup – dates only to 1917 and is usually credited to Louis Diat, chef at the Ritz-Carlton in New York City. This recipe has been "Mexicanized" with the addition of squash for texture and taste, *serrano* chiles for a bit of bite, and two full cups of cilantro to give a light aromatic flavor to this otherwise rather hearty soup. In our classes we serve it hot, but it is equally delicious chilled, in the true tradition of *vichyssoise*.

8-10 SERVINGS

✧ MAKE THE SOUP ✧

- **1 lb. (.5k) calabaza** (*pattypan squash or zucchini*), stems removed and cubed

- **1 large potato**, peeled and cubed

- **8 cups (2 liters) chicken stock**

- **2 large leeks**, chopped, including about 1 inch of green (*Substitute: 3-4 large spring onions, or a mix of onions and leeks*)

- **6 cloves garlic**, chopped

- **2 chiles serranos**, roasted, peeled, seeded and chopped

- **1/4 cup (75ml) butter**

- **2 cups (500ml) cilantro**, rinsed, finely chopped and firmly packed

- **1/2 cup (150ml) Mexican crema** (*Substitute: crème fraîche, plain yogurt or sour cream*)

- **Salt and pepper to taste**

- **One recipe Totopos**

- **10 squash blossoms (optional)**, cleaned

- **4 Tbs. (60ml) cilantro**, rinsed and finely chopped

STEP 1 IN A LARGE SAUCEPAN CONTAINING THE STOCK, cook the cubes of squash and potatoes for approximately 20 minutes, or until vegetables are very tender.

STEP 2 MEANWHILE, IN A LARGE SKILLET, sauté the leeks, garlic and chiles in the butter until the leeks are translucent. Add to the potato/squash mixture; stir and continue cooking, returning to a simmer, approximately 5 minutes. Using a handheld immersion blender, purée the ingredients until fine. Add the cilantro and purée again as above to incorporate all ingredients. Add crema and purée one last time until thoroughly blended. Check for seasonings.

✧ SERVE ✧

STEP 3 LADLE HOT SOUP into warmed bowls. In the center of each serving, float a few of the *totopos* on top of the soup. Then float one squash blossom per bowl on top of the strips. Sprinkle finely chopped cilantro over the entire bowl including the rim.