

Pumpkin Soup with Chili Cran-Apple Relish

recipe courtesy Rachael Ray via Food Network

For the soup:

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, 1 turn of the pan
2 tablespoons butter
1 fresh bay leaf
2 ribs celery with greens, finely chopped (save time and purchase celery already washed, trimmed and cut into sticks, this makes chopping fast work)
1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
Salt and pepper
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons poultry seasoning or 2 teaspoons ground thyme
2 teaspoons hot sauce, or to taste
6 cups chicken stock
1 (28-ounce) can cooked pumpkin puree
2 cups heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

For the relish:

1 crisp apple, such as McIntosh or Granny Smith, finely chopped
1/4 red onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
1/2 cup dried sweetened cranberries, chopped
1 teaspoon chili powder
2 teaspoons honey
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Heat a medium soup pot over medium to medium high heat. Add the oil and melt the butter. Add bay, celery, and onion. Season the veggies with salt and pepper. Cook 6 or 7 minutes, until tender. Add flour, poultry seasoning and hot sauce, to taste, then cook flour a minute. Whisk in chicken stock and bring liquid to a bubble. Whisk in pumpkin in large spoonfuls to incorporate it into the broth. Simmer soup 10 minutes to thicken a bit then add in cream and nutmeg. Reduce heat to low and keep warm until ready to serve.

While soup cooks, assemble the relish: combine apple, onion, lemon juice, cranberries, chili powder, honey and cinnamon.

Adjust seasonings in soup and relish and serve soup in shallow bowls with a few spoonfuls of relish.

(Servings: 4-8, Prep time: 20 min., Cook time: 30 min., Difficulty: Easy)