

Nettled

from Labrys

Difficulty

Bottle Short of a Six Pack

Ingredients

3 lb/1.3 kg celeriac (about 2 large roots)

1 lb/.5 kg onions, finely minced (sweet onions are preferred)

8 oz/225 g carrots, peeled and thinly sliced

8-12 oz/225-340 g fresh nettle leaves, washed in a salad spinner and chopped —

WEAR GLOVES!

1/3 c/75 g ghee (or 1/3 c/80 ml other oil with high heat resistance)

2-4 strips thick-cut smoky bacon (rashers), chopped fine and fried until very crisp

4-6 c/1-1.4 L broth of your choice

salt and pepper to taste



Chef's Notes

- Help identifying nettles and instructions on harvesting them: <http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/Plants.Folder/Nettle.html>

- In winter time, substitute the dried nettles found in tea bags from health food stores. Use 10-12 nettle tea bags to approximate the amount needed for this recipe.

Serves 6-10.

Directions

Prepare your vegetables. Peel the celeriac quite thickly, but carefully, and use a sharp knife. This is hard work, and a dull knife makes it too likely you will cut yourself struggling with this vegetable version of a stone! Slice the celeriac into half-inch rounds, and then cube it into half-inch pieces. You will know the celeriac is peeled deeply enough if it slices and dices easily with no woody impediments to your knife. Mince the onions and slice the carrots.

Have the nettles prepared and set aside. DO NOT touch them uncooked with un-gloved hands.

Have the cooked bacon ready as well, and if you are using a bit of pepperoni, it likely will benefit from a light browning, too.

In a large stock pot, melt the ghee or heat oil, reserving about 2 tablespoons. Add the onions and slowly brown them till almost caramelized. You want a nice golden brown color and must stir them frequently so they do not burn. Remove onions, melt the rest of the ghee and briefly saute the sliced carrots and cubes of celeriac.

Add the broth, stir in the onions and bring to a boil, then simmer until the celeriac and carrot are nearly tender, 5-10 minutes. You may vary the broth amount depending upon if you want a thick stew-like bowlful, or a thinner soup. Add the bacon and sausage slices, then add salt and pepper.

Last of all, add the fresh nettles, lower the heat and cover the pot. Simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Adjust salt and pepper to taste and serve with crusty bread.

I like beer with this meal; it is rough and ready peasant fare with no hopped up pretensions. It can be a rather hearty first course in a big feast menu and is great for folks who have grain allergies since it is not dependent upon thickeners. Relish the coming green of the year!