

BUONA DOMENICA

CARABACCIA: Tuscan Onion and Bread Soup

This is a good winter soup, hearty and soul-satisfying, and made with ingredients you probably have in your fridge and pantry. I like to make it a day ahead to allow the flavors to really mingle.

Recipe slightly adapted from the Via Carota cookbook.

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds (1 Kg) red onions

2 medium carrots

2 celery stalks

Extra-virgin olive oil

6 fresh sage leaves

Fine salt

Freshly ground black pepper

6 to 7 cups Homemade Vegetable Broth (recipe follows)

4 thick slices country bread

4 large eggs

3/4 cup (75 g) freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, for serving

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Halve the onions lengthwise and thinly slice crosswise into half-moons. Finely dice the carrots and celery.

2. Coat the bottom of a large, heavy-bottomed pot with 2 tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil and set over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, celery, and sage leaves; stir in 1 1/2 teaspoons (4 g) salt and a few grinds of pepper. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook gently, stirring often, until the vegetables are completely soft and begin to release their sweetness, 40 to 55 minutes. When the onions begin sticking to the bottom of the pot, raise the heat to medium-high, pour in the broth, and bring to a simmer.

3. Stir the soup, partly cover the pot, and reduce the heat to medium. Cook until the soup is a deep, tawny color and the olive oil has risen to the top, about 45 minutes; season with salt and pepper as needed. The soup should be somewhat brothy but not watery; continue to simmer if necessary to thicken it a bit. If it's too thick, add a couple of splashes more broth or hot water. (At this point, you can let the soup cool to room temperature and refrigerate it for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months. Heat to a gentle simmer before proceeding.)

4. Toast the bread under the broiler and place a slice in each of 4 warmed soup bowls.

5. Crack the eggs and drop them, one at a time, into the soup, making sure they aren't touching. Cover the pot and cook the eggs at a gentle simmer for about 3 minutes, until the whites are set but the yolks are still soft. Scoop out the eggs and place them on top of the slices of bread. Ladle the soup around the eggs and over the bread. Drizzle each bowl with olive oil and sprinkle with a generous amount of Parmigiano cheese.

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HOMEMADE VEGETABLE BROTH

A splash of white wine gives this light vegetable broth a little extra body. (*Recipe slightly adapted from [The Glorious Soups and Stews of Italy.](#)*)

Makes 6 to 7 cups

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons (30 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
2 carrots, peeled, trimmed, and cut into 2-inch (5-cm) pieces
2 ribs celery, trimmed and cut into 2-inch (5-cm) pieces
1 large yellow onion, quartered, 2 quarters each stuck with 1 whole clove
Stalks and feathery leaves from 1 fennel bulb (optional)
5 to 6 sprigs fresh flat-leaf parsley
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1/2 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
1/2 cup (120 ml) dry white wine
8 cups water
1 teaspoon fine sea salt, more as needed

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place 2 tablespoons (30 ml) olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pot and set over medium heat. Add

all the vegetables, herbs, and peppercorns and cook, stirring from time to time, for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the vegetables have begun to soften and the onion is the palest gold. Raise the heat to medium-high, pour in the wine, and let it simmer for about 2 minutes. Add the water and salt and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer gently, uncovered, for 45 minutes. The broth is done when it has reduced slightly in volume and has a full flavor. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt.

2. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh sieve lined with damp cheesecloth into a clean bowl or container. Use the back of a wooden spoon to press down on the solids, extracting as much liquid as possible. Discard the solids. Let the broth cool to room temperature, then cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze.

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