



Broccoli-Cheese Soup

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 12: Soup and Bread from Scratch

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Overcooking the broccoli in our Broccoli-Cheese Soup recipe coaxed all the flavor out of it. Adding a bit of baking soda to the cooking water sped up the cooking process, and pureeing fresh baby spinach along with the other ingredients brightened the Broccoli-Cheese Soup's bright green color and enhanced its vegetable flavor. Finally, cheddar and Parmesan gave our soup adequate cheesy flavor without making it heavy.

Serves 6 to 8

To make a vegetarian version of this soup, substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth.

INGREDIENTS

- 2** tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2** pounds broccoli, florets roughly chopped into 1-inch pieces, stems trimmed, peeled, and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1** medium onion, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)
- 2** medium garlic cloves, minced or pressed through garlic press (about 2 teaspoons)
- 1 1/2** teaspoons dry mustard powder
- pinch cayenne pepper
- Table salt
- 3–4** cups water
- 1/4** teaspoon baking soda
- 2** cups low-sodium chicken broth (see note)
- 2** ounces baby spinach (2 loosely packed cups)
- 3** ounces sharp cheddar cheese, shredded (3/4 cup)
- 1 1/2** ounces Parmesan cheese, grated fine (about 3/4 cup), plus extra for serving
- Ground black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat butter in large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. When foaming subsides, add broccoli, onion, garlic, dry mustard, cayenne, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 6 minutes. Add 1 cup water and baking soda. Bring to simmer, cover, and cook until broccoli is very soft, about 20 minutes, stirring once during cooking.
2. Add broth and 2 cups water and increase heat to medium-high. When mixture begins to simmer, stir in spinach and cook until wilted, about 1 minute. Transfer half of soup to blender, add cheddar and Parmesan, and process until smooth, about 1 minute. Transfer soup to medium bowl and repeat with remaining soup. Return soup to Dutch oven,

place over medium heat and bring to simmer. Adjust consistency of soup with up to 1 cup water. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve, passing extra Parmesan separately.
