Curried Mussel and Butternut Squash Soup

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* **SERVINGS:**6
* **MAKE-AHEAD**

*In the Middle Ages, Flemish cities were at the crossroads of the Northern spice routes, and brewers and cooks both took advantage of exotic spices. You'll see that influence in this curried soup.*

***Plus:***[***More Soup Recipes and Tips***](http://www.foodandwine.com/cooking_guides/soup-recipes)

1. **2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
2. **2 shallots, finely chopped**
3. **1 leek, white and light green parts, sliced crosswise 1/2 inch thick**
4. **1 tablespoon curry powder**
5. **One 2 1/2-pound butternut squash—peeled, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch dice**
6. **2 1/2 cups chicken stock or canned low-sodium broth**
7. **2 pounds mussels, scrubbed and debearded**
8. **1 cup dry white wine**
9. **1/2 cup water**
10. **2 thyme sprigs**
11. **Freshly ground pepper**
12. **Salt**
13. **Cilantro leaves, for garnish**
14. Melt the butter in a medium sauce-pan. Add the shallots and leek and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in the curry powder and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the butternut squash and stock, cover and simmer until the squash is very tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the heat and let the soup cool to room temperature. Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Return the soup to the saucepan.
15. In another medium saucepan, combine the mussels with the white wine, water and thyme and season generously with pepper. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat. Steam the mussels for 3 to 5 minutes, shaking the pan occasionally; transfer the mussels to a bowl as they open. Remove the mussels from the shells and reserve 12 shells for garnish.
16. Carefully pour the mussel-cooking liquid into the soup, leaving behind any sand or grit. Reheat the soup and season with salt. Place 12 of the mussels in the reserved shells. Add the rest of the mussels to the soup to warm them. Ladle the soup into bowls, garnish with cilantro and the mussels in the shells and serve.

**MAKE AHEAD** The curried soup can be prepared through Step 1 and refrigerated overnight.

**SUGGESTED PAIRING**

You&39;ll see the exotic spice influence in the Blanche de Bruges, which is the ideal wheat beer accompaniment to this curried soup.