

French Onion Soup—à la Tammy

I can't say how many servings this is because it totally depends on your serving bowls, but I would venture to say that 4-6 diners would be satisfied.

- 4 pounds yellow onions, peeled, halved, and sliced
- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 Tablespoon butter
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 4 Tablespoons flour
- ½ - 1 cup white wine
- 8 cups beef broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- Cognac, one teaspoon for each bowl
- Gruyère, about 2 cups, grated
- Baguette

Heat the olive oil and butter over medium-high heat until the butter is melted and foamy. Add the onions and sauté about 15 minutes. Add the garlic, lower the heat to medium-low, and simmer till the onions are caramelized. Depending on the heat of your stove, this will take at least an hour, but could take 2-3 hours. In my opinion, the longer the better because the onions mellow so deliciously. Stir occasionally, making sure the bottom of the pan is not getting too brown.

When the onions are caramelized, sprinkle them with the flour and stir for about an hour. Slowly add the white wine and beef broth while stirring. Bring to a gentle simmer. Add the herbs. Cover, and simmer for about 45 minutes.

When the soup is ready, heat up the broiler. Cut baguette (or other crunchy bread) to fit the top of the soup bowl. Toast them crispy, either under the broiler or in a toaster oven.

Put the soup bowls on a baking sheet. Measure a teaspoon of Cognac into each soup bowl, ladle in the soup, float the toasted baguette on top, and top with a generous amount of Gruyère. Put the baking sheet of soup bowls in the oven. Prop the door open so you can keep a careful eye on the soup. The cheese will melt, bubble, and brown ... that's just what you want! Even if it overruns your bowls.

When serving, be sure everyone knows how hot the bowls are ... you certainly don't want to interrupt a cozy dinner with a trip to the emergency room, do you?

NOTE: Some choose to cut the bread super thin before toasting, and layer it several times in the bowl with the cheese, then top it with the soup. I feel that if you have enough onions to make the soup hearty, you don't need more bread. However, you can do whatever you want ... it's your kitchen!