

CREAMY MUSHROOM & CHICKEN BREAD SOUP



It's high time to bring this retro favorite back into style! Our Mini Macrina Casera Loaf is the perfect size for making bread bowls and is crusty enough to contain the soup. The lovely texture of this creamy chicken and mushroom soup is created by puréeing the broth with some of the bread you remove to make the bowls. Homemade stock makes this crowd-pleaser even more flavorful.

- Leslie Mackie

INGREDIENTS:

Serves 4

4 Mini Macrina Casera loaves (8 ounces each)	3/4 cup carrots, peeled and finely chopped
1/2 cup olive oil, divided	3/4 cup celery, finely chopped
4 cremini mushrooms, thinly sliced	3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt	2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1/8 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper	1/2 cup white wine
2 teaspoons fresh thyme, finely chopped, divided	8 cups chicken stock
8 ounces chicken breast	1/2 cup heavy cream
3/4 cup yellow onion, finely chopped	1 cup (2 ounces) Gruyère cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS:

Cut a 1" deep circle, about 4" to 5" in diameter, across the top of each Mini Macrina Casera loaf. Then cut beneath each circle to create a lid for the soup bowls. Using your fingers or a spoon, carve out the center of the loaves, leaving the edges about 1/2" thick. Measure out 1-1/2 cups of the bread you've removed, and reserve it for adding to the soup. Brush approximately 1 tablespoon of olive oil inside each bread bowl and on the underside of the lids. Set the bowls aside.

In a medium sauté pan over medium-high heat, warm 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the mushrooms, salt, pepper and 1 teaspoon of thyme. Brown the mushrooms then remove and set aside. In this same pan over medium-high heat, brown the chicken breast on each side for 2 minutes and then set aside. It will finish cooking in the soup base, so the browning here is just to develop flavor.

In a medium saucepan over medium heat, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the onions, carrots and celery. Cover the pan and sweat the vegetables for 2-4 minutes until the onions are translucent. Add the garlic, rosemary and remaining teaspoon of thyme. Continue to cook for 1-2 minutes.

Add the white wine and simmer until the wine is reduced by half. Add the chicken breast, chicken stock and the reserved bread. Simmer for 30 minutes.

Remove the chicken breast and let cool for 10 minutes.

Preheat oven to 350°F and line a rimmed baking pan with parchment paper.

Pour the soup mixture into a food processor. Do not fill it higher than the top of the blade. Secure the lid and purée the soup. Repeat in batches until you've puréed all the soup. Alternatively, if you have an immersion blender that works as well.

Over medium heat, return the soup to the saucepan and add the heavy cream.

Coarsely chop the chicken breast and sautéed mushrooms. Add them to the soup and let cook for another 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Place the oiled bread bowls and lids on the prepared baking pan and bake for 5 minutes.

Fill the bowls with soup and top with Gruyère. Carefully return the baking sheet to the oven for 3 minutes to melt the cheese. Serve each bread soup bowl topped with its lid. The crispy lid makes for a great soup dipper and don't forget to enjoy the bowl itself once you've spooned out all the soup. It's delicious!