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Purée of Swiss Chard and Romaine Soup

Makes 6 servings

This soup is so green you'll slurp it crazily simply for its color – but it's deliciously smooth and healthy as well. The flavor is as soothing as the texture, and the romaine lettuce keeps the heartier taste of dark green Swiss chard under control.

8 cups water
3/4 pound (about 3) baking potatoes, peeled and halved
1 carrot, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 medium onion, chopped
1/2 celery stalk, chopped
1/2 pound Swiss chard, washed well
1/4 pound romaine lettuce leaves
Handful of arugula leaves
1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon
1/4 cup mascarpone cheese
2 tablespoons salt
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper or more to taste
Fried croutons for garnish (see below)
Chopped fresh parsley for garnish

1. In a pot, add the water, potatoes, and carrot, bring to a boil over high heat, reduce the heat to medium, and cook until tender, about 15 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, in a skillet, heat the olive oil with the butter over medium-high heat, then add the onion and celery and cook, stirring, until translucent, about 5 minutes.
3. Remove the potato and carrot from the boiling water, mash them both, and set aside. Add the Swiss chard, lettuce, arugula, and cooked onion and celery to the boiling water and cook until the chard stems are softened, 15 to 20 minutes. Transfer the greens, their water, and the tarragon to a blender and blend until a puree. Add the mashed potato, carrot, and mascarpone cheese and blend by pulsing for a few seconds several times.
4. Return the puree to the pot and heat over medium heat until very hot. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately with croutons and chopped parsley.

Making Homemade Croutons

Cover the bottom of a large skillet with 1/16-inch of olive oil. Heat the oil over medium heat for a few minutes, then add French bread cut into 3/4-inch cubes. Cook, stirring or tossing frequently, until the cubes of bread are golden brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Remove from the skillet and set aside. Optionally, you can add a crushed garlic clove to the heating oil and then remove and discard it before you add the bread.