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Creamy Cauliflower Chowder

Serves 4 - 6

Put a comforting, warm bowl of cauliflower, corn, and bacon chowder on the menu tonight! Packed with veggies and topped with an array of delicious garnishes, this is one of our favorite winter soups. Warm, hearty, and creamy -- this soup is sure to become a family favorite.

Ingredients:

4 slices bacon, cooked and reserved for garnish	4 cups chicken broth
1 onion, diced	1 head cauliflower, cut into bite-sized pieces
2 cloves garlic, minced	2 cups frozen corn
4 stalks celery, diced	1-1/2 cups half-and-half
4 carrots, sliced	Kosher salt and pepper, to taste
3 tablespoons flour	1 cup sharp cheddar, for garnish
2 bay leaves	4 green onions, sliced for garnish
3 sprigs of thyme	
Pinch of cayenne	
1/2 tsp Kosher salt, more to taste	
1/2 tsp black pepper	

Directions:

1. Fry the bacon. In a large, heavy-bottomed, soup pot, like a Dutch Oven, fry the bacon. Drain on a paper towel, crumble and set aside until time to garnish the soup. Remove all but two tablespoons of bacon grease.
2. Prepare the vegetables by slicing and dicing. Sauté the onion, celery, and carrots in the remaining bacon grease. Add the garlic and continue to sauté until the onions are translucent and soft. Sprinkle the flour over the sautéed veggies and stir while cooking for about two minutes.
3. Add the chicken broth and diced cauliflower. Add the bay leaves, thyme, cayenne, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then simmer until the cauliflower is fork tender, about 15 minutes. Remove the bay leaves and thyme stems.
4. Once the cauliflower is tender, scoop about two cups of the soup carefully into a blender and then blend until very smooth. Add the pureed mixture back to the soup to help thicken the chowder.
5. Add the corn, and half- and-half. Simmer for another 5-10 minutes or until the soup is thickened and warm throughout.
6. Serve with garnishes of crumbled bacon, green onion, and cheddar cheese.