

Pretzel Cheddar Soup

*Alison Ladman - For the Associated Press
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Servings: 6

*4 ounces bacon, diced
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 medium leek (white part only),
diced
2 medium carrots, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 bottle (12 ounce) ale
pinch cayenne
1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
1 cup milk
1 pound very sharp Cheddar cheese,
grated
salt (to taste)
ground black pepper (to taste)
1 cup broken pretzels*

Preparation Time: 45 minutes

In a large deep pot, such as a Dutch oven, cook the bacon over medium heat until crispy and browned, about 6 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the bacon to a paper towel leaving the drippings in the pot.

Add the onion, leek, carrots and celery to the pot. Increase the heat to medium-high and saute' the vegetables until browned, about 10 minutes. Add the flour and stir to coat the vegetables. Stir in the Worcestershire sauce, Dijon mustard, ale and cayenne. Stir continuously while returning to a simmer.

Add the chicken broth and milk. Mix well. Return to a simmer, then cover and lower the heat to medium. Cook until the vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes.

Working in batches, transfer the mixture to a blender and puree' until smooth. Return the soup to the pot over low heat. Stir in the cheese a little at a time. Do not allow the soup to boil. Season with the salt and black pepper.

Ladle into crocks or bowls and serve topped with the broken pretzels.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 176 Calories; 11g Fat (55.4% calories from fat); 10g Protein; 10g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 22mg Cholesterol; 405mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1 Lean Meat; 1 Vegetable; 0 Non-Fat Milk; 1 1/2 Fat; 0 Other Carbohydrates.