

# Sweet Potato-Parsnip Soup with Bacon Croutons

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## Servings: 4

*6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil*  
*1 large onion, sliced*  
*2 leeks, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise*  
*4 teaspoons fresh thyme*  
*Kosher salt*  
*freshly ground pepper*  
*1 pound (about two) sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped*  
*1 pound (two to three) parsnips, peeled and chopped*  
*4 cups low-sodium chicken broth*  
*pinch cayenne pepper*  
*3 slices bacon, finely chopped*  
*4 ounces (four cups) crusty bread, cut into 3/4-inch pieces*  
*3/4 cup shredded gruyere cheese*  
*creme fraiche (for topping)*

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

In a large pot or Dutch oven, combine five tablespoons of olive oil, the onion, leeks, two teaspoons of thyme, big pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender, about 10 minutes. Add the sweet potatoes, parsnips, chicken broth, three cups of water, one teaspoon of salt and the cayenne. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the potatoes and parsnip are tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a small skillet over medium heat, cook the bacon, stirring, until browned and crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer the bacon and drippings to a large bowl.

Add the bread, cheese and remaining one tablespoon of olive oil to the bacon and drippings. Season with salt and pepper. Toss. Spread out on the prepared baking sheet. Bake, tossing once or twice, until toasted and the cheese is melted, 10 to 12 minutes.

Meanwhile, puree' the soup with an immersion blender until smooth (or puree' in batches in a regular blender). Season with salt and more cayenne to taste. Thin with water as needed.

Divide the soup among bowls. Top with a swirl of creme fraiche, the croutons and the remaining two teaspoons of thyme.

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Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 351 Calories; 26g Fat (56.9% calories from fat); 15g Protein; 29g Carbohydrate; 5g Dietary Fiber; 4mg Cholesterol; 135mg Sodium. Exchanges: 1 Grain(Starch); 1 1/2 Lean Meat; 1 1/2 Vegetable; 4 1/2 Fat.