

Our State eats

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John Fleer's Buttermilk Cornbread Soup

Yield: 4 servings.

Peanut oil

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped leeks

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped celery

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon minced garlic

$2\frac{1}{4}$ cups chicken stock, plus extra if needed
to thin out soup

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled day-old cornbread,
plus extra for garnish

1 cup buttermilk (see note on buttermilk)

3 tablespoons heavy cream

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Add enough peanut oil to coat the bottom of a medium soup pot or Dutch oven. Place over medium heat. Add leeks and celery, and reduce heat to medium-low; sweat, stirring often, for about 5 minutes, or until vegetables become translucent. Add garlic and cook for another minute, then add chicken stock and cornbread. Bring to a low simmer, and let simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat.

Stir buttermilk and heavy cream together in a large bowl. Add the hot soup very slowly to the milk mixture, stirring constantly. Puree soup until smooth in a blender or with an immersion blender. Taste and season with salt and pepper.



If the soup is too thick for your liking, add a touch of extra chicken stock.

Return the soup to the pot and heat very gently over low heat until warmed through. Serve with crumbled cornbread on top as a garnish. It's also quite delicious served chilled.

A note on buttermilk: The better your buttermilk, the better this soup will be. When I don't have Cruze on hand, I look for whole-milk buttermilk without stabilizers or additives. Smaller local dairies sometimes have this, and the organic buttermilk found in natural-food groceries is often good, too.

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