

La Vielle Maison Soup

Comfort Me with Apples by Ruth Reichl

Serves 4

Robert Charles was very proud of this recipe. No wonder. Once you've tried his variation on the classic French onion soup, you'll never go back to the original.

1/2 stick (1/4 cup unsalted butter)
6 large onions, (about 3 1/2 pounds), chopped
4 large garlic cloves, chopped
salt and pepper
1 teaspoon all-purpose flour
2 cups dry white wine
4 cups chicken broth
1 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
4 large eggs
1/4 pound Gruyere cheese, grated
1/4 cup heavy cream

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F

Melt the butter over moderately high heat in a heavy, ovenproof 8-quart pot until the foam subsides. Cook the onion and garlic in the butter, adding salt and pepper to taste and stirring, until onion is softened. Stir in the flour and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add the wine, broth and thyme and cook the soup at a low boil, uncovered, stirring occasionally for 15 minutes. Cover the pot and bake in the middle of the oven for 2 hours.

Ladle the soup into 4 individual earthenware crocks or oven-proof bowls (about 1 1/2 cup capacity) and whisk an egg into each. Sprinkle the tops with cheese and bake in the middle of the oven until the cheese is melted, about 10 minutes. Remove the crocks from the oven and spoon 1 tablespoon cream over each serving.