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Pour the contents of the saucepan into the blender with the remaining pureed cantaloupe. Blend until smooth (use caution when blending hot liquids). Taste. Add lime juice and coarse salt to season. Pour soup through a sieve into a bowl, pressing on and then discarding any solids. Chill soup, uncovered, about 2 hours if serving cold, or reheat just before serving.

Mozzarella Pillows

Serves 4

Ingredients

8 small pieces (bocconcini), fresh mozzarella
Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to season
8 thin, but not paper thin, slices prosciutto, at room temperature

Preparation

Preheat the oven to broil and adjust the oven rack about 6 to 8 inches from the heat. Lay one slice of the prosciutto on work surface so the length of the prosciutto is running away from you. Cut the bocconcini to about one-third the width of the prosciutto if necessary.

Place the trimmed mozzarella in the middle of the narrow end of the prosciutto closest to you. Season with salt and pepper. Roll the mozzarella and wrap it in the prosciutto burrito-style completely enclosing the mozzarella inside the prosciutto. Place the pillows seam down on a heavy duty baking sheet. Repeat with the remaining bocconcini and prosciutto.

Place the baking sheet under the broiler. Allow the prosciutto to crisp around the edges and the mozzarella to soften (it may begin to run despite your best efforts to fully enclose the mozzarella).

Service

Arrange two “pillows” in the middle of a shallow soup bowl. Carefully pour the soup around the pillows. Garnish the soup with a light drizzle of mild olive oil, or basil leaves. Serve immediately.

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Savory Farmhouse Cantaloupe Soup with Mozzarella Pillows

Serves 4

Finding fresh melons may not always be easy this time of year. There is nothing more frustrating than planning to serve a refreshing melon soup only to find your melon is less than desirable. I created this recipe to give depth and enhance the melon flavor of cantaloupe regardless of the season. The flavor reminds me of something that would have been served at my cousin's country-farmhouse. The sautéed aromatics darken the pale peach color of the cantaloupe flesh making it look more like a butternut squash or carrot based soup. Garnish with the Mozzarella Pillows and serve with a green salad to make a delicious meal. I recommend serving the soup chilled or just warmed if you are serving the mozzarella "pillows" straight from the oven. The contrast is delightful.

Ingredients

4 to 6 cups peeled, seeded, and coarsely chopped cantaloupe
2 tablespoons grapeseed oil
1/4 cup chopped leeks from 1 fresh medium leek (white and light green part only, darker portion reserved for a bouquet garni)
1/4 cup peeled and finely chopped carrot (preferably organic)
1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
1 bouquet garni (1 bay leaf, 6 sprigs of parsley, 3 sprigs of thyme, 1 sprig of oregano, wrapped together in two leek greens (from the top of the leek) and tied with kitchen twine)
1/2 teaspoon whole mustard seed (optional)
1/2 to 1 cup apple juice (depending on the ripeness/sweetness of the cantaloupe)
Splash of fresh lime juice, to season
Coarse Salt, to season
Mozzarella Pillows, for service (recipe follows)
Mild olive oil and basil leaves, for garnish

Preparation

Purée cantaloupe in a blender until smooth.

Place a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan over medium heat and add the grapeseed oil, leeks, and carrot. Cook the vegetables until softened, but not brown, about 5 to 7 minutes, adjusting the heat as necessary. Add the garlic and cook for about 2 minutes more. Add the bouquet garni, the mustard seeds (if using), 1/2 cup of the apple juice, and about one-third of the pureed cantaloupe. Raise the heat to high and bring to a boil stirring occasionally and submerging the bouquet garni. Taste. Adjust the sweetness by adding more apple juice if necessary. Reduce the heat and simmer until the vegetables are tender and the liquid is reduced by about half, about 20 minutes. Carefully remove the bouquet garni including any leaves that may have escaped into the soup and discard.

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