

## walla walla onion soup

Matthew, Connor, Austin and Charlotte Batey

Executive Chef, The Nash, and kids, ages 11, 12, and 6, Calgary, AB

My father, Ian, started the tradition of making French onion soup with Walla Walla onions when the sweet bulbs come into season in early summer, and now I continue the ritual. The soup combines the best local ingredients and, although made using a classic technique, it's very simple. Topped generously with melted cheese, it's no wonder our family loves it. Be sure to make enough to freeze some to enjoy during the winter.

Makes 6 servings

- 6 Tbsp grapeseed oil
- ¼ cup butter (approx.)
- 3 Walla Walla onions, thinly sliced (see sidebar)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp ground fennel
- ½ tsp ground star anise
- Pepper to taste
- ½ cup red wine (optional)
- ¼ cup sherry (optional)
- 8 cups beef or veal stock
- ¼ cup sherry vinegar
- Salt to taste
- 6 Croûtes (recipe follows)
- 1¼ cups shredded aged firm cheese, such as Gruyère
- 3 Tbsp finely chopped parsley

1. In a large, wide pot, heat the oil and butter over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring often, until the onions start to soften, about 8 minutes.
2. Stir in the rosemary, thyme, coriander, fennel, star anise and pepper to taste. Continue to cook the onions, stirring occasionally, as they now start to color,



Named for Walla Walla County in Washington State where it's grown, the Walla Walla onion is sweet and very juicy. Don't be surprised if the onions take a long time to brown, as their moisture needs to cook out first. If you can't find Walla Walla onions, any sweet onions can be used.

If you use vegetable stock instead of beef stock, this soup is suitable for vegetarians.

Be wary of letting small hands near the heat of the soup bowls. Let younger children help prepare the croûtes, then place each one on a bowl of soup to avoid burns on tender fingertips.



Our family is fortunate to have access to great local ingredients at the market and it's a fantastic way for the kids to get to know where our food comes from. Visiting a farm or dairy helps my kids develop a greater appreciation for the food they eat by meeting the growers and producers and seeing first-hand what it takes to grow and make food.



# Walla Walla Onion Soup

## The Soup Sisters Family Cookbook by Chef Matthew Batey

*Makes about 6 servings*

- 6 Tbsp Grapeseed oil
- ¼ cup Butter (approximately)
- 3 Walla Walla onions, thinly sliced
- 3 cloves Garlic, minced
- 1 sprig Fresh rosemary
- 1 tsp Fresh thyme
- ½ tsp Ground coriander
- ½ tsp Ground fennel
- ½ tsp Ground star anise
- Pepper to taste
- ½ cup Red wine (optional)
- ¼ cup Sherry (optional)
- 8 cups Beef or veal stock
- ¼ cup Sherry vinegar
- Salt to taste
- 6 Croûtes
- 1 ¼ cup Shredded aged firm cheese, such as Gruyère
- 3 Tbsp Finely chopped parsley

1. In a large, wide pot, heat the oil and butter over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring often, until the onions start to soften, about 8 minutes.
2. Stir in the rosemary, thyme, coriander, fennel, star anise and pepper to taste. Continue to cook the onions, stirring occasionally, as they now start to color, adding a little more butter if the onions start to stick to the bottom of the pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onions are evenly browned but not burnt, about 20 minutes.
3. Add the red wine and sherry (if using) and let the liquid bubble as you stir to loosen any brown bits on the bottom of the pot.
4. Add the stock and bring to boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, uncovered, until the soup tastes good, about 1 hour.
5. Fish out and discard the rosemary sprig. Stir in the sherry vinegar and season with salt to taste.

Preheat the broiler to high. Set six onion soup or other ovenproof bowls on a large rimmed baking sheet. Ladle the soup into the bowl. Top each portion with a croûtes then sprinkle evenly with cheese.

6. Place the baking sheet with the bowls about 4 inches from the broiler and broil until the cheese melts and is golden, about 5 minutes.
7. Carefully remove the baking sheet from the oven and let the soup stand for 5 minutes. Sprinkle parsley over each bowl- it really adds a refreshing flavor to the soup-then enjoy!

### **Croûtes**

6 Tbsp bacon fat

6 slices brioche bread, trimmed to fit the top of your soup bowl

1. In a large skillet, heat the bacon fat over medium heat.
2. Add the slices of brioche to the skillet and cook turning once or twice, until the slices are golden and crisp, about 6 minutes. Remove the croûtes from the skillet and drain on a paper-towel-lined plate.