

Potato and Fresh Herb Soup (Irish Traditional Cooking revised edition)

This is one of the most delicious of all soups when made with good Irish potatoes and the bonus of fresh herbs which would have been found in a monastery garden years ago. According to Dr Synott of the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin, culinary and medicinal herbs are likely to have been brought from the continent by returning Irish monks during the early Christian period.

Melt the butter in a heavy saucepan. When it foams, add the onions and potatoes and toss them in the butter until well coated. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover and sweat on a gentle heat for 10 minutes. Add the fresh herbs (reserving a little for garnish) and the stock, and cook until the vegetables are soft. Purée the soup in a blender or food processor. Taste and adjust seasoning. Thin with creamy milk to the required consistency. Serve sprinkled with the remaining chopped herbs.

Note: If you don't have any fresh herbs just leave them out; the soup will still be very good. Fresh parsley is always widely available and would be delicious chopped and sprinkled over the top.

Serves 6

50g (2oz) butter
150g (5oz) onions, diced
500g (18oz) potatoes, peeled and diced
1 teaspoon salt
freshly ground pepper
1 tablespoon fresh chopped herbs
to include parsley, thyme, lemon balm, chives and marjoram
850ml (1½ pints) homemade chicken stock
125ml (4fl oz) creamy milk

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