

Published February 15th, 2023

## Time is the secret ingredient in this French Onion Soup

By Susie Iventosch



French Onion Soup with Gruyere Croutons Photo Susie Iventosch

Last week, when temps dipped across the country, and ice storms persisted, I decided there was no place like home, and no better time for French Onion Soup! There is nothing like a steaming bowl of hot soup to warm a winter's day, and classic French Onion Soup is a universal favorite. It's so comforting with a toasty slice of French bread smothered in bubbly, melted Gruyere cheese. And, if you've never made French Onion Soup, you'll be surprised at how easy it is to make! It just takes a bit of time to caramelize the large quantity of onions. Time is the secret ingredient to making this soup. It takes about 40 minutes (and sometimes a bit longer), for the sugars in the onions to properly caramelize. You can add extra sugar to speed up the process, but we find that makes our soup too sweet, and prefer to let them caramelize in their own sweet time. But, after that, it's a snap.

So, have a little bit of patience, slice the onions very thin, and start cooking them over low heat in a little butter and olive oil, stirring occasionally. Take your time to get them nice and golden brown, not burned. I learned a little trick recently, which is if the onions look like they are beginning to dry out during the caramelizing process, simply add a little bit of water to the pan to keep them nice and moist. This saves on adding too much butter or oil, and it works like a charm.

I usually use sherry as the wine in my soup to deglaze the pan once the onions are thoroughly caramelized, but this time I actually used Calvados (an apple brandy) and it was delicious. Calvados is a fun French apple brandy from the Normandy region and it's so good.

We use a combination of beef broth and chicken broth for our French Onion soup, but you can use all beef broth if you prefer. I think it does need at least some beef broth. Because I'm usually in a hurry and want to eat the soup sooner rather than later, I use packaged broth, but if you have the time, you can definitely make a homemade broth or stock with bones and meat and a mirepoix of carrots, onions, celery, seasonings and herbs.

Another great thing about this soup is that you can make it in advance and refrigerate or freeze it for a later time. Enough chit chat . it's time to get started on making this tantalizing recipe!

French Onion Soup

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

6 large yellow onions, peeled, cut in half and very thinly sliced

2 tbsp. butter

3 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. black or white pepper

1 large clove garlic, minced

1/2 tsp. dried thyme (or 1 tbsp. fresh thyme leaves)

4 cups beef broth (or stock)

4 cups chicken broth (or stock)

1/4 cup dry sherry or Calvados

Salt and Pepper to taste

4 thick slices of French bread

2 cups grated Gruyere cheese

#### DIRECTIONS

Melt butter with olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven. Add onions, cover and cook over low heat, just until wilted and translucent. Remove cover and continue to cook over low heat for about 40 minutes, or until the onions are beautifully browned and caramelized. Stir occasionally and add a few tablespoons of water at a time, as needed, to keep the onions moist.

Once the onions are caramelized, add the sherry and scrape the bottom of the pan with a spoon or spatula to pick up any bits of onion stuck to the bottom. Stir in the minced garlic, salt, pepper and thyme, and continue to cook for a minute or so. Stir in both broths and simmer over medium-low heat, uncovered, for about 30 minutes.

Preheat the broiler to high. Toast the French bread slices. Set aside.

Place your bowls or ramekins on a baking sheet. Spoon hot soup into the individual ramekins, being sure to get plenty of the onions in each bowl. Lay one piece of toast over the top and sprinkle grated Gruyere evenly over the toast and soup. Broil until the cheese is melted and bubbly and beginning to brown.

Serve while it's hot!



Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). This recipe can be found on our website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com). If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977. Or visit <https://treksandbites.com>

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

[back](#)

Copyright © Lamorinda Weekly, Moraga CA