

WATERCRESS SOUP

WITH QUICK PICKLED PEARS & TOASTED HAZELNUTS

This is a great combination of flavors, and, if you're short

on time, each part can be made in advance. The recipe makes more pickled pears than needed for the soup, so use them in salads,

alongside liver pate, or on top of stews. They're extremely versatile. I used the red d'Anjou variety for this recipe, but Bartlett would also

be lovely.

You will need a sterilized 1-pint (570 ml) jar.

To make the pears, put the vinegar, honey, cinnamon, cloves, and salt in a medium pan and stir. Bring slowly to a boil over medium heat. Put the pear slices in the sterilized jar and pour over the liquid and spices. Leave to cool; then cover the jar and store in the refrigerator until needed.

To make the soup, heat the oil in a large pan and add the leeks.

Cook gently for 6 to 8 minutes until softened. Add the garlic and cook for 1 minute. Add the rutabaga and sweet potato, together

with a pinch of salt, and combine. Stir in the broth and 2 cups (500 ml) filtered water, and bring to a simmer.

Cover the pan and cook for 25 to 30 minutes until the vegetables have softened. Add the watercress, parsley, and lemon juice and allow to wilt for a minute or two. Transfer the soup to a blender and blend until smooth. You will need to do this carefully in batches, or instead use an immersion blender. Taste and adjust the seasoning if needed.

Meanwhile, make the hazelnuts. Rinse the hazelnuts, place them in a clean tea towel and rub to remove the skins. Put a frying pan over a medium heat and add the nuts. Cook for 5 minutes, shaking from time to time to stop them burning. Remove from the frying pan and put on a plate to cool.

Ladle the soup into large shallow bowls. Remove some pears from the pickling liquid and place on top of the soup. Roughly chop the toasted hazelnuts, scatter over the soup, and serve.

SERVES 6 TO 8

PREP TIME: 45 MINUTES,

PLUS PRESERVING

COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES

PEARS

¾ cup (185 ml) white wine vinegar

1 tablespoon (15 ml) honey

1 large cinnamon stick, broken in two

4 whole cloves

¾ teaspoon coarse Himalayan

pink salt

2 ripe but firm red pears, peeled, halved, cored, and sliced into

3 wedges each

SOUP

1 tablespoon (15 ml) extra virgin

olive oil

1 leek, thinly sliced

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 lb (450 g) rutabaga, peeled and

cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) chunks

¾ lb (340 g) white sweet potato, peeled

and cut into 1½-inch (3.5 cm) chunks

Pinch Himalayan pink salt

3 cups (750 ml) chicken broth

2 bunches watercress, roughly chopped

1 cup (60 g) chopped fresh flat-leaf

parsley

2 tablespoons (30 ml) lemon juice

HAZELNUTS

¾ cup (67.5 g) hazelnuts, soaked

overnight