

Sweet Potato Soup

2 or 3 slices bacon
1 medium onion, roughly chopped
1 large carrot, chopped
1/2 cup roughly chopped celery
1 shallot, finely chopped
1 1/2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored and chopped
2 1/2 pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
1/2 teaspoon each: dried basil, oregano
1/4 teaspoon thyme
1/2 cup flour
2 quarts chicken stock
1 cup heavy cream
Salt, pepper and hot pepper sauce, to taste
Creme fraiche or sour cream
Thyme sprigs

Saute bacon in large soup pot over medium heat until crisp. Remove bacon with slotted spoon and set aside. To bacon drippings, add onion, carrot, celery, shallot, garlic, apples and sweet potatoes. Saute 4 to 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add basil, oregano, thyme and flour.

Stir until flour is well-mixed and moistened. Add chicken stock and stir until soup comes to boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer until ingredients are soft, about 20 minutes.

Puree soup in processor or food mill. Return to pot and stir in cream and season to taste with salt, pepper and hot pepper sauce. Keep over low heat; don't boil. Serve soup in bowls garnished with creme fraiche or sour cream, reserved bacon and thyme sprigs. Makes 6 servings