

*Churston Traditional*

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# **FARM SHOP**

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CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES SEPTEMBER 2016

Summer may be officially over in meteorological terms and the first mince pies and Christmas cards are already appearing in the shops - as they do every September,

But it's a long way from being the season for heavy, hearty food – towards which thoughts should only turn once the clocks have gone back.

Autumn, on the other hand, is a time when the nights start to feel slightly chillier as the strength of the sun start to wane, under which circumstances a bowl of soup can supply a distinct feeling of warmth.

So here are four French classics to try this month. The idea of garlic soup may seem odd to some of you but this is one of the mildest, most subtle soups you'll ever taste. The fabled sweet, pink onions they grow around Roscoff in Brittany – and were what an army of Onion Johnnies used to hawk around the streets of British towns and cities every winter – are best for the onion soup but mild Spanish onions make a very acceptable substitute.

## CREAM OF CHICKEN SOUP

Ingredients for four. One skinned, boneless chicken breast, 900ml home-made chicken stock, three egg yolks, six tablespoons crème fraiche, 25g each unsalted butter and plain flour, 10 grindings nutmeg, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Heat the stock and poach the chicken breast for about 10 minutes or until firm and cooked through. Remove and shred. Reserve a tablespoon of the meat and purée the rest in a blender with the egg yolks, crème fraiche and a ladle of the stock. Melt the butter in a large, heavy-bottomed pan, add the flour and cook gently for a few minutes until it just starts to turn colour. Whisk in the remaining stock and simmer until it thickens, then away from the heat whisk in the chicken and cream mixture. Reheat gently, add salt, pepper and nutmeg, stir in the shredded chicken, check the seasoning and serve.

## CAULIFLOWER SOUP

Ingredients for six to eight. One large cauliflower, one large onion, three large potatoes, two litres boiling water, two tablespoons crème fraiche, two egg yolks, sea salt, freshly ground black pepper.

Method. Remove all the florets from the cauliflower and chop roughly with any young, tender leaves. Peel and dice the potatoes, peel and chop the onion. Place all the ingredients in a large pan, add the water and two teaspoons salt, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Allow to cool slightly then whizz in a blender or with a stick blender to form a puree. Beat the crème fraiche with the egg yolks in a large bowl and gradually whisk in the soup then return to the pan, season generously and serve with croutons. A tablespoon of fresh chopped chives, chervil or tarragon can be added just before serving.

## FRENCH ONION SOUP

Ingredients for four to six. Four large Spanish onions, tablespoon plain flour, 30g butter, glass of white wine, litre of boiling water, four pinches of salt and 12 grindings of black pepper.

Method. Sprinkle the flour onto a baking sheet and bake in the centre of a medium oven for nine to 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Allow to cool slightly then add the salt and pepper. Place the white wine in a small pan and boil for a few seconds to drive off the alcohol. Halve the onions and slice very finely. Melt the butter in a large, heavy pan, add the onions and cook over a high heat for four to five minutes until they begin to take on some colour. Reduce the heat and cook for a further 25 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking, until they have taken on a deep brown colour. Away from the heat stir in the seasoned flour and whisk in the wine and the water. Simmer for a further 10 minutes, checking the seasoning and serve. For an authentic twist cut thin slices of bread from a baguette, toast lightly and top each one with a little grated Gruyere. Place two slices in each bowl of soup and grill for 20 seconds until the cheese has melted.

## GARLIC SOUP

Ingredients for four to six. Cloves from a whole head of garlic, peeled, 100g fine vermicelli, two tablespoons olive oil, two egg yolks, 50g butter, 50g grated Gruyere, 1.5 litres boiling water, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed pan, add the garlic cloves and cook gently for eight to 10 minutes until lightly browned. Add the water, bring up to the boil, crush and gradually stir in the vermicelli and while it cooks fish out the garlic cloves, crush one by one between two spoons and return to the pan. Place the butter and egg yolks in a warmed serving bowl or tureen and gradually whisk in the soup. Stir in the Gruyere, adjust the seasoning and serve.

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