

## CARAMELIZED ONION SOUP WITH GORGONZOLA CROUTONS

serves 6

7 Tbsp (3½ oz/105 g) unsalted butter,  
at room temperature

2 lb (1 kg) yellow onions, thinly sliced

2 lb (1 kg) sweet onions, such  
as Vidalia, thinly sliced

Salt and freshly ground pepper

¼ cup (6 fl oz/180 ml) dry vermouth

4 cups (32 fl oz/1 l) chicken broth

2 cups (16 fl oz/500 ml) beef broth

3 flat-leaf parsley sprigs, 2 thyme sprigs,  
and 2 small bay leaves, tied together to  
make a bouquet garni

1 baguette, cut on the diagonal into  
slices 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick

6 oz (185 g) tangy blue cheese,  
such as Gorgonzola or Roquefort

In a large, heavy pot, melt 3 Tbsp of the butter over medium heat. Add all the onions and 1 tsp salt. Cook, stirring often, until the onions release their moisture, the moisture evaporates, and browned bits form on the bottom of the pot, about 45 minutes. Raise the heat to medium-high, add ⅓ cup (3 fl oz/80 ml) water, bring to a simmer, and stir to scrape up the browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Cook until the water evaporates and browned bits form again, about 5 minutes. Repeat four times, adding ⅓ cup water at a time.

Add the vermouth, stir to scrape up the browned bits, and cook until the liquid has almost evaporated, about 4 minutes. Add the chicken and beef broths, the bouquet garni, and 1½ tsp salt. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for about 30 minutes to blend the flavors.

Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C). Arrange the baguette slices on a baking sheet and toast until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and preheat the broiler. Crumble the blue cheese into a bowl. Add 2 Tbsp of the butter and, using a fork, mash to form a fairly smooth paste. »»

Spread each baguette slice with a scant tablespoon of the blue cheese mixture and return to the baking sheet. Broil until the cheese is golden brown in spots, about 1½ minutes.

Add the remaining 2 Tbsp butter to the soup and stir vigorously to blend. Remove and discard the bouquet. Season with salt and pepper and serve, topping each bowl with 2 baguette slices.

# 4

APRIL

*Risotto rice lends its creamy consistency to this surprisingly quick and easy soup, punctuated with a handful of verdant green peas. Finish with a sprinkle of grated lemon zest.*

## VENETIAN RICE & PEA SOUP

serves 4

2 Tbsp unsalted butter

1 shallot, minced

1 celery rib, chopped

½ cup (3½ oz/105 g) medium-grain  
white rice, such as Arborio

3 cups (24 fl oz/750 ml) chicken broth

2 cups (10 oz/315 g) fresh or frozen peas

½ cup (2 oz/60 g) grated Parmesan cheese

1 Tbsp minced flat-leaf parsley

Salt and freshly ground pepper

In a large, heavy pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the shallot and celery and sauté until the shallot is translucent, about 2 minutes. Add the rice and cook, stirring, until the grains are translucent with a white dot in the center, about 1 minute.

Raise the heat to medium-high, add the broth and 2 cups (16 fl oz/500 ml) water, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until the rice is tender, about 15 minutes. Add the peas and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes. Stir in the Parmesan and parsley, season with salt and pepper, and serve.