

## Pumpkin and Pastina Soup

Serves 6

✦ The beautiful color of the creamy pumpkin against the green leeks and pasta bits makes this delicately flavored but hearty soup as visually appealing as it is delicious. Instead of the small pasta called pastina, you can use another member of the pasta family, from tiny noodles to small elbows to broken pieces of spaghetti.

SOUPS

- 1 large leek (about 8 ounces), trimmed (leaving some green), quartered lengthwise, washed, and sliced (2 cups)
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon corn oil
- 1 piece (about 2¼ pounds) pumpkin
- 2 cups homemade chicken stock (page 612) or low-salt canned chicken broth
- 4 cups water
- ½ teaspoon salt, or to taste
- ½ cup pastina (any tiny pasta in alphabet, star, or square shapes)

Place the leek in a large pot with the butter and oil and sauté over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes, until it begins to sizzle lightly.

Meanwhile, with a sharp knife, carefully peel the tough outer skin from the pumpkin. (You should have about 1½ pounds pumpkin flesh.) Remove the seeds (which can be roasted as a snack) and cut the flesh into ½-inch pieces. (You should have about 5½ cups.)

Add the cubed pumpkin, chicken stock, water, and salt to the leek and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat, and cook at a gentle boil for 30 minutes.

Add the pastina and cook for 10 minutes longer. Stir, and serve immediately.

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