

Crab & Roasted Corn Bisque

I feel like I first learned how to make bisque, and chowder for that matter, when I lived and cooked in Bar Harbor, Maine. This recipe, though untraditional for New England, is one of our guests' favorites.

Most people thicken bisques with a roux (flour and butter). I do it the older, pre-Victorian way via egg yolks and heavy cream. Why? Though it makes for a thinner bisque, the flavor and texture is superior. We now know that egg yolks raise your cholesterol, but does so by increasing the good HDL's. It might not be a perfect wash, but the egg yolks counteract the negative effects of the heavy cream. We now also know that white flour is unhealthy. (In fact, most whole wheat flour is nothing more than white flour with a little bran thrown back in. Neither real nor healthy.)

Let me add a quick bit of history. Before the Victorian Era most people had a cow and chickens. Thickening sauces and cream soups via egg yolks and cream was cheap and always available. White flour was very expensive; made by the slow process of sifting out the 'undesirable' fiber by hand. Only the rich could afford white flour, and therefore white bread. They also had rich persons' diseases such as gout and diabetes. With the invention of a machine that could cheaply and quickly sift and make white flour, everyone could now have white bread, and by extension, the accompanying diseases. At the same time, more and more people left farming and country life for the cities. Fewer people had cows and chickens. The modern diet and cooking methods began during this period.

Personally, I not only prefer thickening with egg yolks and cream, but I believe that in the long-run the young science of Nutrition (only around 60 years old) will prove it to be the healthier option. Butter is now considered healthier than margarine! In the countryside of France and other nations there are still those who cook using this older method. They are quite healthy. I'll take my chances.

1/2 lb	frozen corn, thawed and drained	2 tsp	turbinado or brown sugar, packed
2 Tbs	extra-virgin olive oil	2 tsp	marjoram
4 each	egg yolks lightly beaten	2 tsp	paprika
2 cups	heavy (whipping) cream	1 tsp	basil
1 can (6 oz)	tomato paste	1 tsp	oregano
3/4 cup	cream sherry	1 tsp	tarragon
2 Tbs	seafood paste—see <i>Miscellaneous</i>	1/2 tsp	salt
1/2 lb	crab meat	1 pinch	cayenne
1 rounded Tbs	garlic, minced	1 pinch	nutmeg
1 Tbs	Old Bay seasoning	3 cups	water
1 Tbs	parsley flakes		

Procedure

- Mix the corn and olive oil either in a very hot frying pan (cast iron works best) or in a 450°F oven on a cookie sheet until corn lightly colored.
- In a stock pot, beat together egg yolks and heavy cream. Beat in the tomato paste until mostly smooth.
- Add all other ingredients, EXCEPT the crab meat. Stirring frequently, warm on a medium heat until just before a simmer. Add crab and simmer for 5 to 8 minutes more.
- **NOTE:** Do NOT allow to boil.

Servings: 8