

Cauliflower-Cashew Soup

Notice anything missing from these bisque ingredients? If you said cream or milk, you're correct! This surprisingly rich soup gets its creaminess from cooking cashews into the broth and then pureeing the entire thing. Vegans have done many things to exploit the fats in cashews and other nuts, from making milk and cheese, to making delicious soups like this. I picked up the trick of substituting nuts for cream while exploring vegan cooking as the head chef of a vegetarian restaurant for about three years. What I discovered was that there is an incredibly diverse world of food that operates wholly independent of animal proteins and fats (and the cholesterol that accompanies them)!

½ cup olive oil, divided
4 large shallots, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
2 bay leaves
2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves
Kosher salt
1 cup dry white wine
1 large head of cauliflower, cored, cut into small florets [if 1 c cashews
6 cups (or more) vegetable stock, preferably homemade, or water

Preparation

Heat ¼ cup oil in a large heavy pot over medium. Add shallots, garlic, bay leaves, and thyme; season with salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are translucent, 6–8 minutes.

Add wine, bring to a boil, and cook until reduced by half, about 4 minutes. Add stock (or water) cauliflower to the pot along with cashews; season with salt.

Cover pot, reduce heat to low, and cook, shaking pot occasionally, until cauliflower is fork-tender and vegetables have released all their water, 20–25 minutes (check occasionally to make sure vegetables are not sticking to the bottom and browning; reduce heat if they are).

Discard bay leaves. Remove from heat and let cool slightly.

Working in batches if needed, purée soup in a blender until very smooth. Return to pot and reheat over medium-low, stirring and adding more stock to thin if needed (soup should be the consistency of heavy cream). Taste and season soup again if needed.