

French cooking exemplifies purity. Much like the notable Gallic restraint practiced with the grape by *les vigneron*s, the French chef prioritizes the unadulterated purity of the vegetable. The following recipe foregrounds the rich flavor of its primary ingredient, winter squash.

At every turn, the holidays invite us to make this creamy soup. Pocket some squash from the centerpiece and head to the kitchen.

WINTER SQUASH SOUP

**For approximately
8 martini glasses/25 shot glasses**

2 winter squash, peeled and chopped
1 Tbs. vegetable oil
1/2 onion, chopped
1/4 tsp. white pepper
salt, to taste
1 gallon hot stock or water (approximately)
1/4 cup+ toasted walnuts or toasted pine nuts (optional)
1/4 cup heavy cream, whipped till just firm
origami garnish

Overheard:

“The quality of the ingredients is more important than the skill of the chef.”

1. On medium low heat and in a covered pan, mix the vegetables with the oil, white pepper, and salt to taste.
2. Sweat until translucent (about 10 minutes).
3. Add hot stock or water, cover, and bring to a boil.
4. Simmer until soft.
5. When vegetables achieve total softness, remove from heat and allow to cool a bit.
6. Adjust liquids as necessary.
7. Add toasted nuts, if desired.
8. Puree.
9. Serve in small glasses.
10. Garnish with a dollop of mildly whipped cream and vegetable origami.

“Cream” as in “Creamy”

Even without the addition of cream as a final decorative touch, this soup qualifies as a cream soup based on its consistency. Indeed, it is the creamy nature of a soup, not the presence of cream per se, that gains it entry into the “cream soup” category.

The essence of cream soup:

- Soften a vegetable (squash? mushroom? broccoli? carrot?).
- Add stock. Puree.