

Cream of Broccoli Soup with Cheddar Cheese

Serves 4

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 large yellow onion, minced
1 celery stalk, minced
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons all purpose flour
4 cups less-sodium vegetable broth
1 ½ lbs fresh broccoli, trimmed
½ cup half and half
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
4 ounces grated cheddar cheese

Melt the butter in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook until soft, about five minutes. Add the garlic and stir until just fragrant. Stir in the flour and cook for one minute. Stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, pour in the vegetable broth. Use a whisk to beat out any little balls of flour. Bring the soup to a simmer.

Cut the stems from the broccoli florets and finely chop them. Finely chop the remaining florets.

Add the chopped florets and stems to the soup and simmer until tender, about 10 minutes. Puree the soup with an immersion blender, or working in small batches with a stand blender, until smooth. Return the soup to the stove and bring to a gentle simmer. Stir in the half and half and add salt and freshly ground pepper as needed. Serve the soup immediately garnished with the grated cheddar cheese.