

This week's recipe comes from one of our members, Danielle [last name if you know it]. She has modified the original recipe, which comes from the Esquire Cookbook (1955 edition), to reduce the amount of saturated fat to a more manageable level.

CREAMED LETTUCE SOUP

6 tbsp butter
5 tbsp flour
2 ½ cups milk
2 heads of lettuce
2 cups chicken consommé
1 tablespoon lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste.

1. Heat milk gently over low heat, but do not boil.
2. Meanwhile, melt 5 (of the 6) tablespoons of butter in a saucepan over low heat. Once melted, whisk in flour. Once combined, gradually whisk in warm milk. Continue to whisk over low heat until sauce thickens. Then set aside.
3. Bring a medium pot of water to boil. Wash the lettuce, cut up into fine pieces, blanch the lettuce by dropping it into the boiling water for just one minute, and drain.
4. In a large sauté pan, melt the remaining tablespoon of butter over medium heat, then add the blanched lettuce and sauté lightly for a minute or two. Add the white sauce and gently simmer for 10 minutes.
5. Strain the lettuce-white sauce mixture through a fine sieve, rubbing as much of the lettuce through the sieve as possible. Add the consommé, lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste.
6. Gently reheat.

Serves 3-4.

Just so, the dish is rich, unctuous and a nice conversation piece as people try to identify which vegetable serves as the base. To cut down on saturated fat, Danielle uses olive oil instead of butter, skim milk instead of whole milk, and skips the step of sautéing the blanched lettuce in butter. She also uses whole wheat flour instead of white flour. Unable to locate a sieve, Danielle uses a blender. Finally, she notes that as modified, the soup is a tad clearer which can be remedied by adding one tablespoon each of olive oil and flour, plus a little powdered skim milk too.