Broccoli Cheddar Soup



**YIELD:** 6 CUPS, SERVES 4

**TOTAL TIME:**1 HOUR

**PREP TIME:**15 MINUTES

**COOK TIME:**ABOUT 45 MINUTES

INGREDIENTS:

1 tablespoon + 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

1 medium sweet yellow onion, diced small

1 clove garlic, peeled and minced finely

1/4 cup all-purpose flour

2 cups vegetable stock (chicken stock may be substituted)

2 cups half-and-half

2 to 3 cups broccoli florets, diced into bite-size pieces

1 cup diced broccoli stems (optional)

2 large carrots, trimmed, peeled, and sliced into very thin rounds, about 1/16th-inch

3/4 teaspoon salt

3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika or regular paprika

1/2 teaspoon dry mustard powder

pinch cayenne pepper

8 ounces grated high quality extra-sharp cheddar cheese, with a small amount reserved for garnishing bowls

DIRECTIONS:

In a small saucepan, add 1 tablespoon butter, the diced onion, and sauté over medium heat until the onion is translucent and barely browned, about 4 minutes. Stir intermittently.

Add the garlic and cook about 30 seconds, stirring constantly so it doesn’t burn. Remove from heat and set pan aside.

In a large heavy-bottom pot add 4 tablespoons butter, flour, and cook over medium heat for about 3 to 5 minutes, whisking constantly, until flour is thickened. You are making a roux and it’s very important the mixture is thick, or soup will never thicken properly later.

Slowly add the vegetable stock, whisking constantly.

Slowly add the half-and-half, whisking constantly.

Allow mixture to simmer over low heat for about 15 to 20 minutes, or until it has reduced and thickened some. Whisk intermittently to re-incorporate the ‘skin’ that inevitably forms, this is normal.

While mixture is simmering, chop the broccoli and carrots. After simmering 15 to 20 minutes, add the broccoli, carrots, and the onion and garlic you previously set aside.

Add the salt, pepper, paprika, dry mustard powder, and cayenne. Stir to combine.

Allow soup to simmer over low heat for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until it has reduced and thickened some. Whisk intermittently to re-incorporate the ‘skin’ that inevitably forms, this is normal.

While soup simmers, grate the cheese. It’s important to use a high-quality cheese (not the cheapest thing you can find) because the flavor of the soup depends on it. Add most of the cheese, reserving a small amount for garnishing bowls. Stir in the cheese until melted and incorporated fully, less than 1 minute.

Transfer soup to bowls, garnish with reserved cheese, and serve immediately.