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Cold soups for hot days

If you're after a refreshing starter in the heat that's both chilled and invigorating, try cool soups

BINDU GOPAL RAO

With the summer season making its official entry, what you eat can help you beat the heat. Intrigued? Well, cold soups are a great way to beat the summer blues. We've curated some handpicked recipes that are sure to help you cool off from the unrelenting heat.

METHOD

- Prepare the corn by husking the corn and carefully removing the kernels from the cobs. Set aside approximately one cup of corn kernels for garnish and place the remaining kernels into a large pot.
- Craft the base. In the same pot containing the corn kernels, add the minced garlic, diced shallot, and unsalted butter. Sauté the mixture over medium heat until the shallot turns translucent and releases its fragrance, approximately five minutes.
- Simmer with broth. Pour the vegetable broth into the pot, ensuring it covers the corn mixture. Bring the pot to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to low and let it simmer for 15-20 minutes until the corn kernels are tender.
- Blend to smoothness. Utilise an immersion blender or transfer the mixture in batches to a blender. Blend until the texture becomes smooth and creamy. Exercise caution when blending hot liquids.
- Incorporate creaminess. Return the blended mixture to the pot over low heat. Stir in the heavy cream and season generously with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Allow the soup to simmer for an additional five minutes to allow the flavours to meld.
- Chill and present. Transfer the prepared soup to a large bowl and refrigerate it for a minimum of two hours until thoroughly chilled. This soup is intended to be served cold.
- Garnish and enjoy. Prior to serving, garnish each portion of the chilled corn cream soup with a sprinkle of freshly chopped chives and the reserved corn kernels. For added texture and taste, consider topping with crispy bacon bits or homemade croutons.

Himalayan Cold Chaas Soup with Crispy Bhutta Stick

Courtesy: Hitesh Bhargava, sr. sous chef, WelcomHeritage Parv Vilas Resort & Spa, Solan

INGREDIENTS

- 200 ml *chaas*/butter milk
- 10 ml mustard oil
- 2 red chili whole
- ½ tsp whole coriander
- ¼ tsp fenugreek seed
- ¼ tsp cumin seed
- ½ tsp chopped ginger
- 2 cloves of chopped garlic
- 1 onion chopped
- ½ tsp chopped green chili
- ¼ tsp turmeric powder
- Pinch of *hing* (asafoetida)
- 1 tbsp green coriander leaves
- Salt to taste

- ½ tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp fine chopped onion
- ¼ tsp chopped green chili
- ¼ tsp green coriander
- ¼ tsp chili flakes
- Salt to taste

METHOD

- Heat mustard oil in a pan and add red chili whole, whole coriander, cumin seed till sound of crack.
- Now add *hing*, fenugreek seed, chop garlic, chop ginger, chop onion till golden brown.

For the crispy *bhutta* stick

- 2 tbsp maize flour
- 2 tbsp spoon *besan*

INGREDIENTS

- Cantaloupe melon, 500 gm / 1 piece
- Oranges, 100 ml / 2 pieces
- Yellow bell pepper, 60 gm / 1 piece
- Yoghurt, 100 gm / ½ cup
- Lemon, 15 ml / 1 tablespoon
- Lime leaves finely chopped, 2 pieces
- Mint leaves, 5 gm / 2 sprigs
- Tabasco, 5 ml / 1 teaspoon
- Honey, 10 ml / 1 tablespoon

For garnish

- Crushed black peppers, 2 pinch
- Salt, 2 pinch
- Mint sprigs / basil sprigs

Though not common in India, cold soups are a great dish to relish on a hot summer day. Cantaloupe melon is refreshing and full of flavours soup that is also high in a lot of nutrients. A great summer staple for a quick lunch fix, don't forget to garnish it with a hint of mint for an extra punch."

METHOD

- Cut the melon, remove all the seeds and fibres, and make small cubes.
- Add the orange juice, diced yellow bell peppers, yogurt, lemon juice, lime leaves, mint leaves, tabasco, honey, and black pepper. Puree in batches until smooth. Pass through a strainer and place in the freezer to chill.
- Before serving, adjust sweetness with honey and add two pinches of salt to taste. Serve garnish with orange slices and mint or basil sprigs.

Lavender Citrus Chilled Delight

Courtesy: Dr Malini Saba, a passionate culinarian and author of the cookbook 'The Abbreviated Cook'

A touch of sweetness from honey or maple syrup balances the flavours perfectly, while diced cucumber and fresh mint leaves add a tantalizing crunch and herbal freshness. Served chilled in elegant glasses, garnished with lemon slices and mint sprigs, each spoonful is a symphony of flavours that invigorates the senses and transports you to a realm of culinary delight."

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups water
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup honey or maple syrup
- 2 tbsp culinary lavender buds
- 1 medium cucumber, peeled and diced
- 2 tbsp fresh mint leaves, chopped
- Ice cubes (optional)
- Lemon slices and mint leaves for garnish

METHOD

- Boil water, then steep lavender buds in it for 10-15 mins. Strain and let it cool.
- Mix infused water with lemon juice and honey/maple syrup.
- Add diced cucumber and chopped mint leaves to the mixture.
- Chill in the refrigerator for at least one hour.
- Serve in glasses or bowls over ice cubes. Garnish with lemon slices and mint leaves.
- Enjoy as a refreshing and hydrating soup for weight loss.

Watermelon Gazpacho

Courtesy: Chef Deepak Gore, in-house culinary chef, Tata Sampann

This watermelon gazpacho is perfect for hot summer days or as a refreshing starter for any meal."

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups or 600 grams diced, seedless watermelon
- 1 large or 120 grams cucumber peeled, deseeded and diced
- 1 red bell pepper, deseeded and diced (optional, for heat)
- 3 tbsp fresh lime juice
- 2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped for garnish
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Optional garnishes: diced avocado, crumbled feta cheese, additional cilantro leaves

METHOD

- In a blender or food processor, combine the diced watermelon, cucumber, red bell pepper, red onion, garlic, and jalapeño pepper (if using). Blend until smooth.
- Add the fresh lime juice, extra virgin olive oil, and chopped cilantro to the soup. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
- Transfer the gazpacho to a large bowl or container and refrigerate for at least one hour to allow the flavours to meld and the soup to chill thoroughly.
- Ladle the chilled watermelon gazpacho into bowls. Garnish with diced avocado, crumbled feta cheese, and additional cilantro leaves if desired. Serve cold and enjoy!

Refreshing Corn Cream Chilled Soup

Courtesy: Akshraj Jodha, executive chef, TTC Grand Bharat

At ITC Grand Bharat, we're dedicated to offering a rejuvenating summer dining experience, epitomised by our 'Refreshing Corn Cream Chilled Soup'. Crafted with freshly picked corn, vegetable broth, garlic, shallot, and a touch of butter, this soup promises to invigorate your palate with its creamy texture and vibrant flavours. Revel in the delightful taste and creamy consistency of this chilled corn cream soup, whether enjoyed as an appetising starter or a light meal on a balmy summer day."

INGREDIENTS

- 6 ears of freshly picked corn
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1 shallot, finely diced
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons fresh chives, finely chopped (for garnish)
- Optional: Crispy bacon bits or homemade croutons for topping

Cantaloupe Melon Cold Soup

Courtesy: Sumit Kumar, corporate chef, Leisure Hotels Group

