

Butternut Squash And Apple Soup with Bacon

2 slices bacon
1/2 medium onion, chopped fine (about 1/2 cup)
white and pale green parts of 1 large leek, chopped fine and washed well (about 1 cup)
1 large garlic clove, minced
1/2 bay leaf
1 1/4 pounds butternut squash, seeded, peeled, and cut into 1-inch pieces (about 3 cups)
2 medium Granny Smith or other tart apple, peeled and chopped
2 cups low-salt chicken broth
1/2 cup water plus additional for thinning soup
2 tablespoons sour cream or *crème fraîche*

Accompaniments

Sour cream or *crème fraîche*
chopped unpeeled apple

In a skillet cook bacon until crisp and drain, reserving 1 1/2 tablespoons fat.
Crumble bacon.

In a heavy saucepan cook onion, leek, garlic, and bay leaf with salt and pepper to taste in reserved fat over moderate heat, stirring, until softened.

Add squash, apple, broth, and 1/2 cup water. Simmer mixture, covered, until squash is very tender, about 15 minutes, and discard bay leaf.

In a blender purée mixture in batches, transferring as puréed to a clean saucepan, and add enough additional water to thin soup to desired consistency.

Whisk in sour cream or *crème fraîche* and salt and pepper to taste and heat soup over moderately low heat until hot (do not boil).

Serve soup topped with crumbled bacon and accompaniments.

Makes about 4 1/2 cups