



From Florence – Enoteca Toscana

Onion Bread Soup

Italians have a magical way to thicken soup – day old bread

- 2 Tablespoons unsalted butter, divided
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 4 extra-large sweet onions, peeled, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme, divided
- Sea salt; freshly ground black pepper
- 6 cups low sodium beef stock or as needed
- 1/2 cup dry red wine, divided
- 1 four-inch piece Parmigiano Reggiano cheese rind (optional)
- 8 ounces sliced Italian bread; crust removed
- Freshly grated Parmigiano Reggiano cheese for garnish and serving

In large cast iron skillet over medium heat, add 1 Tablespoon butter to melt with 1 Tablespoon oil. Add half of sliced onions; sprinkle with 1/2 teaspoon thyme, salt, and black pepper; cook for 10 minutes, turning occasionally; increase heat to medium high; cook for 5 minutes, stirring until golden brown. Remove to large soup pot or large slow cooker. Cook remaining onions repeating the above steps. Place in soup pot or slow cooker with previously cooked onions.

Meanwhile, heat beef stock; mix in red wine. Pour over precooked onions; Cover; cook over low heat for 1 hour or cook in slow cooker on medium for 3 to 4 hours to blend flavors.

If adding cheese rind, add 30 minutes to simmer. Remove rind before serving. The soup can be made to this point and refrigerated for up to 2 days.

Prepare the Toasted Bread Cubes:

Preheat oven to 200-degree F. Remove crust from bread; discard. Cut the bread into 2-inch pieces (about 6 cups) and scatter in an even layer on a cookie sheet. Bake until lightly toasted, about 30 minutes. Remove from oven; set aside.

Or Prepare Garlic Toasted Bread Cubes: In a bowl, combine 1 Tablespoon melted butter, 1 Tablespoon olive oil, and 1/8 or 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder. Remove the crust from 8 ounces of sliced Italian bread. Place on foiled lined cookie sheet. Brush both sides of each bread slice with butter mixture; sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese as desired. Broil one side of bread slices under broiler until golden brown, about 3 to 5 minutes. Turn each slice over; broil other side until golden brown. Remove from oven. Cool. Cut into bite size crouton shapes.

Add a layer of bread to soup bowl; spoon hot soup over bread. Garnish with grated Parmesan cheese as desired. Serves: about 6

Cook's Note: Make the recipe using traditional cooking on the top of the stove or use a browning technique with the slow cooker to have a soup supper waiting for you. Adjust the slow cooker heat according to the manufacturer's directions.

Original Recipe Inspired by Cathy Mantuano and Tony Mantuano in “Wine Bar Food” book.

About the Recipe: This soup recipe highlights the sweet flavor of golden-brown onions in rich beef broth. It’s thickened by the layer of toasted croutons on the bottom of each dish. A light dusting of grated Parmesan cheese adds a sprinkle of old-world flavor to the top. This is a great soup made with very simple ingredients.