

Wild garlic soup

Wild garlic is now bursting with life - you will discover it in semi shaded spots in moist woodlands. It grows in drifts of glorious white flowers that mingle with the bluebells. An aroma of garlic fills the air. It is a wondrous plant to cook with too, as every part of it is edible, even the leaves. Because of the garlic's fragrance you will find this soup a splendid dish to serve at this time when you are not looking for robust, earthy flavours, rather something that's gentle on the palate and promises of spring.

As the main ingredient costs nothing if harvested from the wild responsibly, and the other main ingredients such as potato, onion are reasonably priced, this soup is quite cheap to make, yet tastes like a seasonal dream.

To serve 4 people you will need:

- 2oz/ 50g butter
- One large onion roughly chopped
- 2 generous bunches of wild garlic leaves (one for the soup, one for pesto)
- 2 medium sized potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped
- Small bunch parsley - chopped fine
- 2 tspn double cream
- 300 ml hot chicken stock
- Extra virgin olive oil for pesto
- 2oz (50g) walnuts for the pesto
- 2oz (50g) parmesan cheese for the pesto
- Salt and freshly ground black peppercorns.

Method:

- Cook the onions and potatoes with the butter over a medium heat until they begin to soften - ten minutes should belong enough.
- Stir in the stock, season and bring to the boil and continue cooking until the onion and potatoes are quite tender, season and add the chopped parsley.
- Stir in one bunch of the wild garlic leaves and cook for another couple of minutes, then add the cream. Allow to cook for a few minutes then zap in a blender until reaches a smooth consistency.
- Make the pesto by crushing the walnuts, grating the parmesan and crushing the wild garlic leaves in a pestle and mortar with a little olive oil. Season, stir together and adjust taste then add a swirl to each bowl of soup once it has been brought back to full heat. Serve with chunks of crusty bread.