



**French Onion Soup** - I used to do this with butter...not any more. If you use low sodium broth, this is a Healthy Heart soup that tastes incredibly good. Makes three medium servings or 2 large bowls of soup.

### **Ingredient List**

One medium Vidalia or sweet onion

One medium red onion

12 cloves of garlic

One cup of beef broth (...I use low sodium Campbell's brand or make my own from scratch if I have a left over set of beef ribs from a prime rib roast...the home style beef stock takes a lot longer to make...)

Ground pepper

Any brand name French Onion Soup seasoning (most brands are all the same ingredients...but check the sodium level on the ingredient list)

One sourdough Italian country style mini-loaf of bread

1-2 slices of mozzarella cheese per bowl

Kreta Reserve Extra Virgin Olive Oil

### **Preparation Instructions**

1. Using one half of each onion, shave off thin slices of onion and place into a 3 to 5 quart covered pan. Add 4 ounces of Kreta Reserve Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Stir the onions to coat with the oil and raise the heat level until the oil starts to sizzle (a click or two past medium heat).

2. Pre-heat the oven to 450 degrees F. On a small roasting sheet pan, place the 12 garlic cloves and drizzle some KR EVOO on the cloves. Put the sheet pan on the middle rack for 5-7 minutes or until the garlic have started to turn brown. Turn off the oven and leave in the oven for another 2-4 minutes. Do not let the garlic get completely brown...you are looking for a "roasted" look with a fairly soft garlic clove at the end of this process. Roasting time depends on your oven and the size of the garlic cloves.

3. Stir the onions about every 3-4 minutes. The onions should start to wilt and caramelize while the garlic is roasting. Once the garlic is ready, add to the onions. Stir while the garlic starts to absorb some of the oil in the pan and comes up to the sizzling temperature.

4. Once the onions have caramelized and the garlic is heated up, add 1/2 cup of good Merlot. Let the alcohol boil off, then stir until the liquid starts to resemble a syrup. Once that happens, add the 8 ounce can of beef stock and bring to a low boil.

## Recipes for Kreta Reserve EVOO From the Kitchen of Rip Kirby

5. Add a good half dozen twists of cracked pepper. Stir until this comes to a boil. Taste. It should be very beefy at this point (too beefy tasting to enjoy this yet) but you should be able to judge the pepper level. Adjust as you like.
6. Carefully add 1/2 cup of hot water. Taste. You are close to the edge of a weak soup at this point. Hold off on adding more water unless you are sure of the beefy taste level.
7. Here is the adjustment part of the soup base drill...adding about a teaspoon of the French Onion Soup seasoning at a time and tasting for your palette. Add enough to make it taste the way like you like it...one teaspoon and tasting check at a time. If you add too much seasoning, add another tablespoon or two of hot water to bring it back to the onion side of the soup taste. If you need to stretch the soup at this point, you can add water and seasoning up to a point, then your beef stock taste is lost after that.
8. After your adjustments to the beef versus onion flavor tasting drill are over, add a tablespoon of KR EVOO. Stir into the soup base and bring the whole thing to a boil while stirring, then turn off the heat, cover the pan, and let it rest while you prep for the oven work.
9. Turn on the oven to high broil and find a sturdy sheet pan that will hold all the bowls evenly spaced under the broiler burner.
10. Fill soup bowls with the French Onion Soup and place on the sturdy sheet pan.
11. Cut the sour dough mini-loaf into large (2 bite) chunks and place 4 chunks into each bowl.
12. Cover the bread with slices of mozzarella cheese and slide the sheet pan with the soup bowls into the oven on the second rack down from the broiler burner. Monitor this to make sure the cheese does not burn. After 1-2 minutes the cheese should be melted and slightly browned on top. It is ready! Remove from the oven immediately at this point.
13. Place the hot soup bowls on a dinner plate to serve. Make sure you tell your dinner guest(s) that the bowl is VERY HOT!!
14. Serve with a fresh salad and a warm sandwich on a sourdough roll (recipes for these items will follow later in the week).

NOTE: Double the portions for more soup!