

Nettle Soup

It may sound bizarre but, once a year when the stinging nettles are young and fresh (usually early April), they make a great soup. The colour can be a stunning green.

Take care and, using some good rubber gloves or the like, harvest the youngest and tenderest top leaves of the new nettles. The quantity is approximately one standard washing-up bowl full. I strip the leaves from the stems, again using those trusty rubber gloves and, clearly, they need a darn good washing before drying in a salad spinner.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	2 hrs
cooking time:	45 mins

Ingredients

30g butter
1 medium onion, chopped
4 medium new potatoes,
 quartered
400g nettles, prepared as
 above
400ml chicken stock
250ml semi-skimmed milk
salt & pepper

Method

In a pan large enough to take all the nettles, first melt the butter. Sweat the onion and potatoes together until the onion is soft and translucent. Add the nettles and sweat these, stirring constantly until they wilt. Then put in the chicken stock and milk and bring to simmering point. Add a little salt (I think cooking it with salt helps develop the flavour) but take care not to over do it at this stage. Simmer all together gently (take care it doesn't boil over) for about 35 minutes until the potatoes are cooked through.

Blitz the soup in a liquidizer to a very smooth consistency. (You'll probably have to do this in two batches depending upon the capacity of your liquidizer.) Return it to the pan and reheat it before adjusting the seasoning to taste with salt & pepper.