

TASTE



SOUPED UP

BY LARAINÉ PERRI

Walk into any English pub on a blustery day, and beer and cheddar soup will be among the offerings. If you can't afford the plane ticket, transcend the season with this version of the dish, which includes aged English cheddar and a marvelous, nutty brown ale. Forego the traditional crouton topping (remember, we're talking beer here): A smattering of pretzel nuggets adds not just crunch, but a wink. Beat back the cold with this bowl of warm, soul-stirring goodness.



NUT BROWN ALE AND FARMHOUSE CHEDDAR SOUP

Serves 4-6

12 ounces aged extra-sharp cheddar cheese, grated
12 ounces Samuel Smith's Nut Brown Ale
2 cups chicken stock
2 cups whole milk
1 cup finely chopped onion
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
3½ tablespoons flour
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves
1 teaspoon smoked paprika
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1 teaspoon dry mustard
¼ teaspoon kosher salt

- Melt butter in a heavy stockpot and sauté onion over medium-low heat until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add garlic and thyme; sauté 1 minute more.
- Add flour and stir gently for about 3 minutes. Add smoked paprika, dry mustard and salt. Cook together 1 minute.
- Add ale, stock and milk; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover and simmer gently for 20 minutes, whisking occasionally.
- Pour soup through a fine sieve into a large bowl, pressing on the solids with the back of a spoon. Return the strained soup to the pot, off the heat. Stir in Worcestershire sauce, and add cheese a handful at a time, stirring gently. If soup is not smooth, pass through the sieve once more.
- Spoon into bowls and top each serving with pretzel nuggets.