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Here is a recipe of a refreshing cold soup for summer that is beautiful to look at and delicious — it was served to us at a restaurant in a hill town in Provence.

Tante Marie's Cream of Beet Soup with Cucumbers and Chevre

Ingredients

3 Tbs. olive oil
 2 red onions, chopped
 coarse salt
 1/4 cup red wine
 3 lbs. beets, peeled, and cut in 1/2-inch dice
 1-1/2 quarts chicken (or vegetable) stock
 freshly ground black pepper
 2 to 3 Tbs. balsamic (or sherry) vinegar
 1 cup creme fraiche (or sour cream)
 1/2 English cucumber
 1 Tbs. olive oil 2 oz. soft fresh goat's cheese



Instructions

To prepare the soup, put the olive oil, onions, and a half a teaspoon of salt in a saucepan over moderately high heat. Cook for about 10 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the onions are soft. Stir in the wine and let boil a minute, stirring, before adding the beets with the stock. Continue cooking until the beets are soft. Puree in a blender, a food processor, or with an immersion blender. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and vinegar. Stir in the cream. Transfer the soup to a bowl and chill.



To prepare the garnish, cut the cucumber (with its peel) into a tiny dice. Coat the cucumber with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.



To serve, ladle the soup into bowls, place a generous spoonful of the diced cucumber in the middle of each bowl. And, arrange three small spoonfuls of the goat's cheese around the cucumbers.

Serves 6.



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