



## Bacon Beer Bisque

**Yields:** 8-10 servings

**Total time:** 45 minutes

Some tailgates can get a little brisk, others downright brutal, with cold winds, even snowstorms. We've got the remedy, though, besides dressing in layers, that is... A great, warm soup with some fun croutons. Some of the best parts of tailgates are bacon, beer and cheese, so we threw 'em all together and fire up the cauldron and make something magical, like that big trick play that actually works. Smokey bacon, a combination of cheeses and creamy goodness has made this the highlight of a few tailgates we've been lucky enough to be a part of. Easy to make, just takes a little time (and a little bacon) and totally worth it. The pretzel croutons add a little something to the presentation and the bite, too. Get on 'em.

*Ingredients (yields 8-10 servings)*

- 1 lb of bacon, cut into ¼" lardons
- 3 diced sweet onions
- 1 ½ C chopped celery
- 4 bell peppers (yellow, red, orange), chopped up
- 6 cloves of minced garlic
- 1 tsp kosher salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ½ C unsalted butter, cut into Tbsp slices
- ½ C all-purpose flour
- 1 can of beer, an Oktoberfest or a pilsner, nothing too hoppy
- 3 C chicken stock
- 1 C whole milk
- 1 C half-and-half or heavy cream if you're feeling frisky
- 1 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 ¼ chopped chives
- 2 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp dry mustard
- 1 tsp hot sauce
- At least 1 lb shredded cheese, we used a combo smoked gouda, cheddar and parm
- ½ C of leftover nacho cheese from a recent trip to the bar
- Pretzel croutons (directions below)
- Chopped parsley or green onions for garnish

*Ingredients for Pretzel Croutons*

- 5 microwaveable pretzels, or 5 store-bought big ol' soft pretzels
- ¼ C extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp garlic powder



- Salt and pepper to taste

#### *Directions for Pretzel Croutons*

- Cut pretzels into 1 ½ inch cubes
- Toss pretzels into olive oil
- Add in garlic powder, salt and pepper
- Throw on a cookie sheet, and bake for 12 minutes, checking after 6, until they are harder on the outside and still spongy on the inside

#### *Directions*

- In a large pot, cook the bacon lardons until mostly done, then remove 'em onto a paper towel-lined plate and keep the grease in the pot
- Add in the veggies, and stir to coat them in the bacon grease, and cook over medium heat until soft, around 5-6 minutes
- Throw in the chives, garlic, salt, pepper and cayenne and cook for another 2 minutes
- Add the butter, stir until it is totally melted
- Add in the flour, making a roux, until it is golden brown, 2-3 minutes
- Add in the beer, and cook for another 3 minutes until it starts to thicken a bit
- Stir in the broth, milk and half-and-half, and bring to a boil
- Reduce heat to a simmer, stirring often, for 10-15 minutes, until it coats the spoon
- Add in the Dijon, Worcestershire, dry mustard, stir until evenly distributed
- Remove from heat
- Slowly add in the cheese and stir until it melts completely
- You can freeze this, or you can make it up to 4 days in advance
- Once hot, scoop into a bowl, and garnish with 3-4 croutons and some parsley or green onions