

# FRENCH ONION SOUP

On this cold morning, we take comfort and culinary inspiration in the passage of time celebrated in Jacques-Louis David's painting, *Portrait of Cooper Penrose*. David paints his distinguished subject with noted grace, using little ornamentation to distract the viewer from Cooper Penrose's age. The effect is an homage to a full life and passage of time.

It seems only befitting then to pair this portrait with a classic French Onion Soup recipe. Time is the essential ingredient, a necessity to coaxing out the refined flavors of red wine, beef broth, and caramelized onions. Simple yet sophisticated. A fitting tribute to David's masterpiece.

## RECIPE

SERVES 4-6

### INGREDIENTS

- 4 Tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 cups thinly sliced yellow onions
- 7 cups beef broth
- 3 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons dried thyme or 4 fresh thyme sprigs
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 heaping tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup full-bodied red wine such as a Cabernet Sauvignon
- 4 one-inch thick slices French bread
- 1 cup grated Swiss cheese

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### DIRECTIONS

Melt butter in a large stock pot over medium heat. Turn heat to low and add onions, bay leaves and thyme. Cook 10 minutes, then add salt. Continue to cook on a low simmer until the onions are very soft and caramelized, about 25 minutes, stirring occasionally to keep onions from burning. Add flour and cook for 5 minutes, stirring constantly to keep flour from burning. Stir in wine to deglaze the pot. Add beef broth, bringing the soup back to a simmer, and cook for 30 minutes. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

Heat the oven broiler.

Ladle soup into oven safe serving bowls and place on rimmed baking sheet or pan. Place one slice of bread in each bowl followed by sprinkling of 1/4 cup cheese. Broil until cheese is bubbly and golden brown, approximately 3-5 minutes.

Serve with your favorite red wine.

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