



Creamy Swiss Onion Soup *(inspired by Gulf Shore Delights)*

3 slices bacon, chopped
4 very large yellow onions, sliced (8 cups total)
1/4 cup unsalted butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 teaspoon thyme
3/4 cup sherry, divided (do not use cooking sherry - use the real thing)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
Sea salt and coarse ground black pepper
4 cups low sodium beef stock
1-1/2 cups heavy cream

2 cups shredded Swiss cheese (I used baby Swiss and Madrigal)
6 to 8 slices country style bread
French fried onions and crispy bacon as garnish

Heat a large heavy Dutch oven over medium heat and add chopped bacon. Cook until crisp. Remove from pot reserving bacon and drippings separately. Return 1 tablespoon bacon drippings back to pot and add butter and when butter has melted add sliced onions. Cook, stirring often, until onions are a rich golden brown - about 20 to 25 minutes. Add garlic, thyme and 1/2 cup of sherry, stirring bottom of pot to release any browned bits. When sherry has almost completely reduced, stir in flour. Cook, stirring constantly for 2 minutes - mixture will be very heavy and thick. Slowly add beef stock and whisk well until smooth. Lower heat to a slow simmer, cover pot and cook for 30 minutes, stirring often to prevent sticking. Taste for seasoning and add salt and pepper as needed. Add heavy cream and heat to serving temperature. Do not boil. Just before serving, stir in remaining 1/4 cup of sherry. Meanwhile, heat oven to 350. Brush bread slices on one side with reserved bacon drippings and place bread on a rack on a sheet pan. Toast for 10 minutes, turning once or until crouton is crisp. To serve, place soup in oven proof bowls. Top each with a crouton, then add approximately 1/4 cup shredded cheese. Bake until cheese melts. Garnish with French fried onions and reserved bacon. Makes 6 to 8 servings.