



October 2022, Halloween

Pumpkin soup with witches' fingers dippers

Pumpkin, apple and sage soup

Dressing up for Halloween is always fun. It won't be long before my own children are big enough to join in too. In many countries a lot colder than Jamaica, soup is always a popular option for warming up after an evening of trick or treating!

Happy Halloween!

Usain Bolt



Serves: **4 – 6**
Makes: **Approx 1.5 litres**
Prep time: **30 minutes**
Cook time: **15 – 20 minutes**

Ingredients

- Oil for frying
- 1 large onion (halve, peel and roughly chop)
- 2 tbsp sun-dried tomato paste
- 1kg pumpkin or butternut squash (peel, remove seeds and cut into 1–2cm cubes)
- 2 eating apples (cored and roughly chopped, no need to peel)
- 600ml vegetable stock
- 320g sheet ready rolled puff pastry. Use at room temperature
- 25g grated Parmesan
- 20 whole blanched almonds
- 1 tbsp milk
- Small bunch of fresh sage (roughly chopped), or 1tsp dried sage. Reserve some leaves for garnish if using fresh



Pumpkin soup with witches' fingers dippers

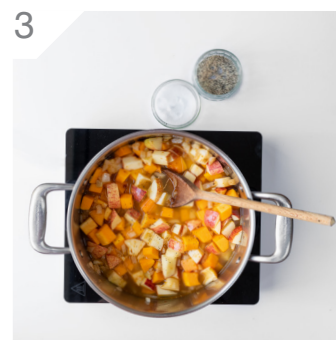
Pumpkin, apple and sage soup



1 Preheat the oven to **220°C / 200°C Fan / Gas 6**. Heat a drizzle of **oil** in large saucepan on medium heat. Fry the **onion** for 4–5 minutes until starting to soften. Stir in 1tbsp of the **sun-dried tomato puree** and cook for another 1–2mins, stirring.



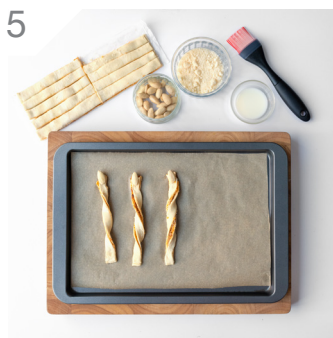
2 Add the **pumpkin or squash**, and the **apple** and stir to coat. Season with salt and pepper



3 Pour in the **vegetable stock**, bring to the boil and simmer for 15–20 minutes



4 While the soup simmers, unroll the **pastry** and spread the remaining **tomato paste** onto one half. Sprinkle with half of the **Parmesan** and fold the pastry in half to make a square. Cut in half and then cut each half into 10, to give 20 strips, approx 2cm x 10cm.



5 To make the witches' fingers, give each strip a couple of twists and press a **flaked almond** into the top to make a 'fingernail'. Transfer to a lined baking tray. Brush with **milk** and sprinkle with the remaining **cheese**. Cook on the top shelf of the oven for 12–15 mins until risen, crisp and golden.



6 When the **squash or pumpkin** is soft and cooked through, allow to cool slightly, add the sage and blitz with a handheld blender, or in a liquidiser, until completely smooth. Add a splash of water to give the desired consistency if it's too thick. Taste and season.

When ready to serve, heat the soup through gently and serve garnished with the reserved leaves. Serve hot with the frightful fingers!

Chef Usain's Winning Tips

The soup can be frozen for up to 3 months. Freeze it in portion sizes so that it can easily be defrosted, and you can just take what you need out of the freezer. The 'fingers' will keep in an airtight container for 2 – 3 days.

Just fill and chill
Usain Bolt

