

Michigan Celery and Almond Soup

- * 1 large leek
- * 1 bunch Michigan celery, quartered
- * 1 large Michigan carrot, scraped and quartered
- * 1 large Michigan onion, quartered
- * 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted
- * 4 cups canned chicken broth
- * 1 teaspoon salt
- * 3 sprigs fresh parsley
- * 1 sprig fresh thyme
- * 1 bay leaf
- * 2 cups half-and-half
- * 1/4 cup ground blanched almonds
- * Garnish: toasted, sliced natural almonds and whipped cream (unsweetened)

Remove and discard root, tough outer leaves and tops of leeks to where dark green begins to pale. Chop leeks. Position knife blade in food processor bowl, add leek, celery, carrot and onion and process until coarsely chopped. Sauté chopped vegetables in butter in a Dutch oven until tender. Add broth and salt. Stir well.

Place parsley, thyme and bay leaf on a piece of cheesecloth. Tie ends of cheesecloth securely. Add to celery mixture in Dutch oven. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 1 hour. Remove and discard cheesecloth bag.

Transfer celery mixture to processor bowl and process until smooth. Let cool slightly. Add half-and-half and almonds. Stir well to combine. Ladle out into individual soup bowls and garnish if desired. Makes 6 cups.