

Onion Soup Les Halles

adapted from [Anthony Bourdain's Les Halles Cookbook](#)

printed from [Smells Like Food in Here](#)

6 oz butter

8 [large onions](#), thinly sliced

2 oz [port](#)

2 oz balsamic vinegar

2 qts [dark chicken stock](#)

4 oz [slab bacon](#), cut in ½-inch cubes

1 [bouquet garni](#)

salt and pepper

[baguette croutons](#) (sliced and toasted in the oven with a little olive oil)

grated [Gruyere cheese](#), up to 12 oz

In the large pot, heat the butter over medium heat until it is melted and begins to brown.

Seven minutes from just beginning to melt through melting, separating and foaming, the butter was just beginning to brown.

Add the onions and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until they are soft and browned.

Measures were required to, as Bourdain put it, "make damn sure the onions are a nice, dark, even brown color." The onions, in such a pool of butter, were simply sweating. Clearly, onion and pot interface had to be increased.

The majority of the softened onions and butter(y juices) were transferred from the Dutch oven into a large bowl, allowing those onions remaining to get nicely browned.

Incrementally, butter and onions (softened and fresh) were introduced to the Dutch oven, stirring as appropriate.

Increase the heat to medium high and stir in the port and the vinegar, scraping all that brown goodness from the bottom of the pot into the liquid.

Add the chicken stock. Add the bacon and bouquet garni and bring to a boil.

Reduce to a simmer, season with salt and pepper, and cook for 45 minutes to an hour, skimming any foam off the top with the ladle. Remove the bouquet garni.

Meanwhile, because I don't have fire-proof soup crocks, I prepared cheesy croutons in the oven. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spritz baguette slices with olive oil and bake in the oven on a baking sheet 5-10 minutes just to get them slightly toasted without browning. Pile high with shredded Gruyere cheese and bake another 5-10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

Dish soup into bowls and float three or four cheesy baguette slices on top of each.