

Pumpkin Apple Soup

<http://cakebatterandbowl.com>

Ingredients:

- 4 slices hickory smoked bacon, chopped
- 4 large shallots, chopped (1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken stock
- 1 cup unsweetened apple juice
- 1 15-ounce can pure pumpkin puree
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/3 cup heavy cream
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 apple, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon roasted salted sunflower seeds (or pumpkin seeds if you have some around!)

Directions:

Heat a large stockpot over medium high heat and add bacon to the pan; cook for 5 to 7 minutes or until crispy, stirring regularly. Drain on paper towels. Add shallots to the same stockpot with the bacon grease and sauté for 5 to 7 minutes or until soft. Add garlic and sauté one additional minute. Add chicken stock, apple juice, pumpkin puree, the cooked bacon, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and let simmer for 15 minutes. Use an immersion blender to puree until smooth; stir in heavy cream and apple cider vinegar and heat 2 to 3 more minutes or until warmed through.

Meanwhile, make the apple garnish by placing apples, butter, and brown sugar in a small pot over medium heat; sauté for 10 to 12 minutes, or until apples are softened and lightly browned. Stir in sunflower seeds. Scoop soup into bowls and garnish with chopped apples. Makes 4 servings.