

2016. January 3rd

Aphrodite's beetroot soup with fennel seeds

Ingredients:

5 small beetroots with stalks and leaves.

1 medium potato

1 medium or half a large onion

1 stick of celery

2 garlic cloves

2 teaspoons fennel seeds

2 tablespoons of olive oil

about 750 ml water

salt and freshly ground black pepper.

What to do. ...roughly speaking:

Chop the onion, garlic and celery very finely.

Wash the beet greens (stalks and leaves) thoroughly. Chop them coarsely.

Scrape and chop the beetroots and potato into bite-sized chunks.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Fry the onion and celery for a couple of minutes.

Add the garlic, cover with a tight fitting lid and turn down the heat.

Sweat these ingredients for a few minutes until they soften.

Turn up the heat again and add the fennel seeds. Stir the veg and fennel seeds around so that the seeds don't stick or burn, but cook quite quickly. Add the chopped beetroot stalks and leaves and keep stirring around as they fry a little. Turn down the heat, put the lid back on and leave the mix to soften for about 5 minutes.

Now add the beetroot and potato, stir to coat it with the other ingredients and add the water, salt and pepper (just a few turns of the salt and pepper mill - you don't want to mask the taste of the fennel and beetroot.)

Bring to the boil, then turn it down. Cover and simmer very gently for about 40 minutes, or until you can pierce the beetroot pieces easily with a fork. Check the taste, and add more salt and pepper if it needs it.

Remove from the heat and use a wand blender to liquidise the soup. I like to leave a few chunky bits for variety. If it seems too thick, add a little water.

About Kay's Essex Road Recipes.

Essex Road Recipes are improvised around what looks good in my local shops. Living just around the corner from 4 of London's best food shops; **Steve Hatt** the fishmonger, **The Market Garden** greengrocers, **James Elliott** the butcher and **Raab's** Bakery, it's easy to be inspired. Once you get the hang of it, you can start to improvise your own menus.

All recipes are for about 4 people. They're not written for complete beginners; I'm assuming that you know a little bit about cooking so I've been approximate and poetic with measurements, times, weights and instructions. I hope you get the idea, and go on to improvise your own Essex Road recipes.

Most of the other ingredients, including spices and oils, are available from the convenience stores between the New Rose and Raab's. Pasta, risotto rice and really good oils and wines are to be found in **Saponara** on Prebend Street which also serves the best fresh pasta and pizza in the neighbourhood.

The Essex Road Recipes blog is at:
<https://essexroadrecipes.wordpress.com>