RECIPE

Creamy Pumpkin Barley

A slow-stirred pot of creamy pearled barley with pumpkin and Parmesan, cooked in olive oil, a one-pot fall dinner.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

50 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 2 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 small onion, finely chopped (about ¾ cup, 110 g)
- [ ] ¼ tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 ½ cups pearled barley
- [ ] ½ tsp dried ground sage
- [ ] ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- [ ] 5 cups hot low-sodium chicken broth, plus hot water if needed
- [ ] 1 cup canned pumpkin purée, not pie filling
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ½ cup grated Parmesan

Method

1. Warm the broth in a saucepan and keep it at a bare simmer beside the stove. Keep a cup of hot water handy too.
2. Warm the olive oil in a wide, heavy pot over medium heat. Cook the onion for 5 minutes, until soft. Stir in the garlic powder for 30 seconds.
3. Stir in the barley, sage and nutmeg. Cook 2 minutes, stirring, until the barley smells toasty.
4. Turn the heat to medium-low. Add the broth about ¾ cup at a time, stirring often, and wait until each addition is nearly absorbed before the next. The pot should bubble gently, never boil hard.

5 After about 4 cups of broth have gone in, stir in the pumpkin, salt and pepper. Keep adding broth, or hot water at the end, until the barley is tender with a little chew and the pot flows slowly when you tilt it. Plan on 50 to 60 minutes from the first splash of broth, not the 40 to 45 you would give it at sea level: water simmers at about 203 °F here, so barley takes about a quarter longer. Not yet test-baked at 5,300 ft; keep the hot water ready.

6 Take the pot off the heat. Stir in the Parmesan and let it sit 2 minutes. The starch from the barley makes it creamy. Serve in warm bowls right away, because it tightens as it stands; a splash of hot water loosens it.

7 Cool leftovers within 2 hours, no more than that, then refrigerate. Reheat to 165 °F with a splash of water.