



## Very "Vichyssoise" Potato Leek Soup

By Erin Fletter

**Prep Time** 15 / **Cook Time** 25 / **Serves** 4 - 6

### Fun-Da-Mentals Kitchen Skills

**blend:** to stir together two or more ingredients until just combined; blending is a gentler process than mixing.

**chop:** to cut something into small, rough pieces using a blade.

**garnish:** to decorate a dish or plate of food to enhance its flavor or appearance, using things like parsley, fruit slices, or edible flowers.

**knife skills:** Bear Claw (growl), Pinch, Plank, and Bridge (look out for trolls).

**sauté:** to cook or brown food in a pan containing a small quantity of butter, oil, or other fat.

**season:** to add flavor to food with spices, herbs, and salt.

**simmer:** to cook a food gently, usually in a liquid, until softened.

### Equipment

- Large saucepan or pot + lid
- Cutting board
- Kid-safe knife
- Measuring cups
- Blender (immersion or regular)
- Ladle

### Ingredients

Very "Vichyssoise" Potato Leek Soup

- 3 T butter **\*\***(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance brand OR olive oil)**\*\***
- 2 to 3 large leeks
- 2 large russet potatoes **\*\***(for NIGHTSHADE ALLERGY sub 2 sweet potatoes or yams)**\*\***
- 4 C vegetable stock OR 4 C water with 4 vegetable bouillon cubes **\*\***
- 2 T chopped fresh chives or parsley, optional
- 1/4 C heavy cream **\*\***(for DAIRY ALLERGY sub dairy-free/nut-free heavy cream or milk)**\*\***
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

## Food Allergen Substitutions

### Very "Vichyssoise" Potato Leek Soup

**Dairy:** Substitute dairy-free/nut-free butter, like Earth Balance brand OR olive oil. Substitute dairy-free/nut-free heavy cream or milk for heavy cream.

**Nightshade:** Substitute 2 sweet potatoes or yams for russet potatoes.

**Gluten/Soy/Nightshade:** For vegetable stock or water + bouillon cubes, check labels for possible allergens, like gluten, soy, or nightshade—if necessary, use water only.

## Instructions

### Very "Vichyssoise" Potato Leek Soup

#### intro

"Vichyssoise" (VEE-shee-swaz) sounds French and is based on a classic French potato and leek soup; however, French chef Louis Félix Diat, invented this chilled version of potato leek soup while working at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in New York City in the early 1900s. He named it after the spa town of Vichy, France, near his hometown.

#### superstar food spotlight

Leeks are vegetables and are related to onions. Most of the leek grows underground. Looking at a leek, which part do you think grows under the soil, and which part sticks out? The roots and white and pale green parts of the leek are in the ground. The dark leaves stick out above the ground and are in the sunlight, gathering energy for the plant to grow. Because leeks grow underground, sand and soil may need to be rinsed out before eating them.

#### rinse + slice

Have your kids slice **2 to 3 large leeks** in half lengthwise and then rinse the cut leeks under running water, pulling apart the green layers to remove any sand or soil that is tucked inside. Rinse them

thoroughly! Next, they can finely chop only the white and pale green parts of the leek. The dark green leaves are tough and bitter, while the white and pale green parts are delicate and sweet. You should have about 3 1/2 to 4 1/2 cups of thinly sliced leeks when finished.

### wash + chop

Time to chop up the potatoes! Adults wash and then cut the **2 russet potatoes**, skins and all, into equal pieces and give one to each child. The smaller your kids can finely chop their potato, the faster the soup will cook!

### melt + sauté

Melt **3 tablespoons butter** in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the sliced leeks and stir to coat with butter. Cover your saucepan and cook until the leeks are tender, stirring often, about 4 to 6 minutes. Then, add the potatoes and continue to cook, covered, for another 4 to 6 minutes until potatoes begin to soften but not brown.

### add + simmer

Add **4 cups vegetable stock** and bring to a boil. Then reduce heat, cover, and simmer until vegetables are very tender, about 10 minutes and up to 30 minutes.

### blend + season

Remove the soup from heat and either use an immersion blender to blend your soup directly in your saucepan or carefully pour it into a blender, in batches, and blend until smooth. Count to 5 in French while blending: 1 un (uhn), 2 deux (deuh), 3 trois (twah), 4 quatre (KAH-truh), 5 cinq (sank).

### season

Return the soup to the saucepan if you used a blender. Thin it with water if it is too thick and season with **salt and pepper** to taste.

### add + whisk + garnish

Add **1/4 cup of heavy cream** to the soup and return to a simmer, whisking until cream is incorporated. Ladle into bowls to serve and garnish with freshly chopped chives or parsley and **Fastest French Croutons** if desired. Délicieuse!

## Featured Ingredient: Leeks!

Hi! I'm a Leek!

"My name sounds like I might ooze out or spill the beans, but I'm a vegetable (and spelled differently than "leak")! I look a bit like a green onion, and I'm in the same family but much larger and thicker and have a mild onion taste. So, for all those who aren't fans of the onion's strong flavor, leeks are perfect for you!"

## History & Etymology

Ancient Greeks and Romans grew and ate leeks. The first-century Roman cookbook, Apicius, included four recipes with leeks.

There are archaeological samples of dried leeks as well as drawings and wall carvings of leeks from ancient Egypt. Hippocrates, the ancient Greek physician, prescribed the leek as a cure for nosebleeds.

The leek became a national emblem of Wales after soldiers in the 7th century wore pieces of leeks in their helmets to distinguish themselves from their Saxon enemies.

Leeks are native to the eastern Mediterranean region and the Middle East.

Indonesia produces the most leeks worldwide.

The word "leek" comes from the Old English word "lēac," which is of Germanic origin.

## Anatomy

Leeks are cultivated vegetables and members of the Allium genus, which includes chives, garlic, onions, scallions, and shallots.

A leek has three main sections: the root, the stem, and flat, thick, blue-green leaves. The edible stem is actually a tightly layered cylindrical bundle of leaf sheaths.

Leeks are grown in loose soil with good drainage, often in the same regions as onions. Summer leeks are harvested in the season they are planted and are generally smaller and milder than overwintering leeks, which are harvested in the spring after the previous year's sowing. Leeks can tolerate colder conditions. They are one of the easiest plants to grow in your home garden!

## How to Pick, Buy, & Eat

Leeks are ready to pick when the stem is firm and white, at least one inch wide and three inches long.

Some smaller varieties may be ready when the stem is one-half to three-quarter inch wide.

When buying leeks from the grocery store's produce section, choose ones that are straight with firm, white stems, no soft or brown spots, and green leaves that are not yellow or wilted.

Some care has to be used when preparing to cook a leek, as sand and soil are often found between the layers. To ensure it is all washed away, cut off the base of the stem and the long green leaves, leaving just the white stem. Then, cut the stem lengthwise into two long halves using a knife. Wash these halves under a running tap to loosen the grit, checking that none is left between the layers.

Leeks can be used instead of onions when a milder onion taste is desired. They work well in salads, soups, and stews. "Cock-a-leekie" soup is a Scottish soup consisting of chicken, leeks, chicken stock, a thickener like rice, barley, or oats, and sometimes prunes. "Vichyssoise" is a chilled leek, potato, onion, and cream soup created by a French chef working in New York City.

Leeks are popular in Turkish cuisine, like their "zeytinyağlı prasa," a dish of thickly sliced leeks and other

vegetables braised in olive oil with spices like cumin and pepper. The Swiss canton of Vaud has a leek dish called "papet vaudois," a dish of leeks and potatoes cooked in stock and white wine. Sausages are added to the top of the vegetables during the last part of cooking, and sometimes cream is added before serving.

## Nutrition

Leeks are a low-calorie food with negligible fat. They are a good source of vitamin K and manganese and a moderate source of vitamins B6 and C, folate, and iron.

Leeks are rich in flavonoids, antioxidants that may have anti-inflammatory properties. Studies have indicated that members of the Allium family may help repair damaged DNA and contribute to lower cancer risk.

Leeks also contain two carotenoids, lutein and zeaxanthin, substances known to protect the eyes.