

Cheese Head Beer Soup with Macaroni

1 1/2 cups dry elbow macaroni, cooked according to package directions
6 slices bacon, diced
1 1/2 cups minced onion
1 cup minced celery
1 cup minced carrots
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup flour
2 cups chicken broth
12 ounces beer
1 cup half and half, milk or cream
4 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
1 1/2 teaspoons dry mustard
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
Chopped chives for garnish (optional)

Heat a large Dutch oven or other heavy bottom pot on medium-high. Cook diced bacon until crisp. With a slotted spoon remove bacon to a paper towel lined plate to drain. Pour out excess fat (if necessary), leaving 2 tablespoons of fat. Add butter, onion, celery,, carrots and garlic to the bacon grease. Cook until tender, about 5 minutes.

Mix in flour, stirring until flour is hot and bubbly. Slowly add broth, scrapping up any brown bits, deglazing the pan. Add beer, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Turn down the heat and let simmer until thickened, about 5 minutes. Add half and half, then add the cheese one cup at a time, ensuring the first cup melts prior to adding the next.

Just prior to serving add cooked macaroni and bacon (reserve some for garnish if desired). Garnish with chives.