

CHEF SARA RHODES

CARROT AND FENNEL SOUP

6 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided
1 large fennel bulb, thinly sliced
1 small onion, thinly sliced
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
1 small Yukon Gold potato, peeled and chopped
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
Salt and pepper
4 cups chicken stock
½ cup heavy cream
¼ cup sour cream or crème fraîche
1 Tbsp. pure maple syrup
¼ cup hazelnuts, toasted and coarsely chopped
Louisiana Hot Sauce to taste



Heat 4 Tbsp. of the butter in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add fennel, onion, carrots, potato, thyme and bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium low, cover and cook, stirring occasionally and reducing heat, if necessary, until vegetables are soft but not browned, about 20 to 25 minutes. Add stock and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until potato is falling apart, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and remove herbs. Puree in blender or use an immersion blender and process until smooth. You will have to work in batches if you are using a blender.

Return to pan. Add the remaining 2 Tbsp. of butter and the heavy cream. Bring just to simmer and stir to melt the butter and blend with the cream. Add a few drops of the hot sauce and season again with salt and pepper to taste.

Mix the sour cream and the maple syrup in a small bowl. Serve the soup topped with the maple sour cream and the toasted hazelnuts.