Cream of Broccoli Soup

1 package Knorr-Swiss Hollandaise Sauce mix
1 cup milk
1 stick unsalted butter
1 large head fresh broccoli (for thicker soup, use 2 medium-sized heads)
1 pint heavy cream
1/2 C (or more) Parmesan cheese, finely grated
Freshly-ground nutmeg
Oregano
Savory
Salt
White pepper
Black pepper
(Optional: lemon juice)

Make the Hollandaise sauce following package directions, using the milk and the butter. You may wish to add lemon juice to this, depending on how you like your Hollandaise to taste. When the sauce is ready, cover and place on lowest heat.

Fill a large pot with cold water, salt, and bring to a boil over high heat. Cut off the bottom inch of the broccoli stalk. Remove small leaves. If the stalk is very tough, you can peel the outside using a sharp knife or vegetable peeler. Rinse broccoli. When the water boils, plunge the broccoli into the water and boil rapidly for 6 to 8 minutes. You want the broccoli to turn a deep emerald green and have the stalk cooked, but do not overboil. Remove the broccoli from the water and cut off the tips. Chop the tips into small pieces and set aside. Cut the stalks into large chunks.

In a food processor, purée the broccoli stalks and Hollandaise sauce mix in small batches until thoroughly liquefied. Place the mixture in a double boiler over simmering water (if pots are at a premium, drain the broccoli cooking water, rinse, and re-use that pot—but lower the heat and make sure the soup does not scorch.) Stirring frequently, add the cream to the broccoli-Hollandaise mixture. Warm the mix to the desired temperature and add the broccoli tips.

As the tips warm, add the cheese and stir well into the soup. You may wish to add more cheese for a more robust taste. Season with the spices, being especially liberal with the nutmeg and white pepper.

Serve hot with bread, a semi-soft delicate white cheese (e.g. Havarti) and a smooth white wine.

This recipe serves two people as a main course (with a bit left over) or four people as a soup course.

—David Sisk