

Pemberley Chestnut Soup

Warming on a winter day, this thick soup has a pleasantly earthy flavor from the chestnuts and is wonderful with a chunk of fresh bread. For vegans, omit the crème fraîche.

Chestnuts are one of the trees Elizabeth, in the company of her aunt, Mrs. Gardiner, admires during her visit to Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's seat in Derbyshire. Through the windows of its northern aspect is "a most refreshing view of the high woody hills behind the house, and of the beautiful oaks and Spanish chestnuts which were scattered over the intermediate lawn." Spanish, or sweet, chestnuts were largely planted for ornamental reasons, but no doubt their sweet, delicate fruits were not neglected either. Perhaps, after her marriage, whenever Elizabeth Darcy eats chestnut soup in her new home, we might imagine her thinking back to that first visit to Pemberley when her view of her would-be suitor began to change and she reflected that "to be mistress of Pemberley might be something."



SERVES 4

PREP + COOKING TIME: 35 MINUTES

¼ cup olive oil
40 sage leaves
2 celery sticks, chopped
2 garlic cloves, chopped
1 red chili, deseeded and chopped
1 teaspoon chopped rosemary
14-oz. can chopped tomatoes
1½ cups vacuum-packed chestnuts
14-oz. can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
1½ cups vegetable stock
salt and black pepper

To serve

2 tablespoons olive oil
¼ cup crème fraîche, to serve

1. Heat 3 tablespoons olive oil in a large saucepan until a sage leaf sizzles and crisps in 15–20 seconds, then fry the remaining leaves in batches until crisp, lifting out with a slotted spoon onto a plate lined with paper towels. Set aside.
2. Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan and sauté the celery, garlic, chili, and rosemary for 2–3 minutes.
3. Stir in the tomatoes, chestnuts, and garbanzo beans with the stock and simmer for 8–10 minutes.
4. Remove a third of the soup and blend, using a hand blender or in a food processor or blender, to give a thick consistency. Return to the pan, season, and serve with a swirl of olive oil, a dollop of crème fraîche, and a few crispy sage leaves.

