

Tomato and Fennel Soup

City Cuisine, p.55

Serves 6 (HdeH 4)

1 large fennel bulb with stems and leaves
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 medium onion, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon white pepper
½ cup Pernod
2-3 ripe tomatoes, seeded, and chopped
2 cups chicken stock or canned broth
½ cup heavy cream
½ cup half and half
Dash of Tabasco

1. Wash and trim fennel, discarding stems. Separate bulb into stalks, and thinly slice. Reserve wispy inner leaves for garnish.
2. Melt butter over moderate heat in a large stockpot or Dutch oven. Cook onions, with salt and pepper until soft, about 10 minutes. Add fennel, reduce heat to low, and cook an additional 5 minutes.
3. Turn heat to high and add Pernod. (Don't be alarmed if the alcohol flames. It will subside momentarily.) Cook until liquid is reduced by half. Add tomatoes and Chicken Stock. Reduce to a simmer and cook, covered, about 15 minutes.
4. Puree in a blender until smooth. Strain back into pot and add cream and half and half. Bring to a boil, remove from heat, and stir in Tabasco. Serve immediately, garnished with fresh fennel leaves.