

Copycat Panera Bread Broccoli Cheddar Soup: The Best Homemade Recipe

Copycat Panera Bread Broccoli Cheddar Soup



TIME
5-7 min

PRINT
Recipe Card

SAVE
PDF

SOURCE
ChefManiac

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups whole milk
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 4 cups fresh broccoli florets, chopped small
- 1 large carrot, shredded
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

Swaps and Notes:

Broccoli: I recommend using fresh broccoli and chopping the florets into small pieces so they get tender and are easy to eat. You can use frozen broccoli, but it may require a slightly longer cooking time.

Cheese: Sharp cheddar is the key to that classic Panera flavor. I highly recommend shredding your own cheese from a block, as pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that can prevent it from melting smoothly.

Broth: Use a high-quality chicken or vegetable broth for the best flavor. Low-sodium broth is a great option if you want to control the salt level.

Spices: The nutmeg is a subtle but important flavor note that adds a warm, savory quality to the soup. Don't skip it!

Step-by-Step Instructions:

SautØ the Vegetables: In a large pot or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the finely chopped onion and cook until it's soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.

Make the Roux: Sprinkle the flour over the onion and garlic. Stir constantly for 1-2 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste.

Build the Soup Base: Slowly whisk in the chicken or vegetable broth, making sure there are no lumps. Continue to whisk until the mixture is smooth and begins to thicken.

Add the Dairy and Vegetables: Stir in the whole milk, heavy cream, nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Bring the soup to a gentle simmer, then add the chopped broccoli florets and shredded carrot.

Simmer: Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let the soup simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender.

Add the Cheese: Turn off the heat. Gradually stir in the shredded cheddar cheese, a handful at a time, until it is completely melted and the soup is smooth and creamy.

Serve: Ladle the hot soup into bowls. Serve immediately with some crusty bread for dipping.

Tips for Success:

Shred Your Own Cheese: This is the most important tip for a silky-smooth, lump-free soup.

Pre-shredded cheese won't melt the same way.

Low and Slow: When adding the cheese, make sure the heat is off. High heat can cause the cheese to separate and become grainy.

Cut Your Veggies Small: Chopping the broccoli and carrot into small pieces ensures they cook quickly and are easy to scoop up with a spoon.

Serving Suggestions and Pairings:

Nutritional Information Per Serving:

Calories: 450-500

Protein: 20-25g

Fat: 35-40g

DIRECTIONS

1. **SautØ the Vegetables:** In a large pot or Dutch oven, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the finely chopped onion and cook until it's soft and translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the minced garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.
2. **Make the : Roux:** Sprinkle the flour over the onion and garlic. Stir constantly for 1-2 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste.
3. **Build the : Soup Base:** Slowly whisk in the chicken or vegetable broth, making sure there are no lumps. Continue to whisk until the mixture is smooth and begins to thicken.
4. **Add the : Dairy and Vegetables:** Stir in the whole milk, heavy cream, nutmeg, salt, and pepper. Bring the soup to a gentle simmer, then add the chopped broccoli florets and shredded carrot.
5. **Simmer:** Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let the soup simmer for about 20 minutes, or until the broccoli is tender.
6. **Add the : Cheese:** Turn off the heat. Gradually stir in the shredded cheddar cheese, a handful at a time, until it is completely melted and the soup is smooth and creamy.
7. **Serve:** Ladle the hot soup into bowls. Serve immediately with some crusty bread for dipping.
8. **Tips for Success:** Shred Your Own Cheese: This is the most important tip for a silky-smooth, lump-free soup. Pre-shredded cheese won't melt the same way.
9. **Low and : Slow:** When adding the cheese, make sure the heat is off. High heat can cause the cheese to separate and become grainy.

10. Cut : Your Veggies Small: Chopping the broccoli and carrot into small pieces ensures they cook quickly and are easy to scoop up with a spoon.
11. Serving Suggestions and Pairings: This soup is perfect on its own, but it's even better with some classic pairings. A crusty French baguette or a sourdough bread bowl for dipping is a must. A simple side salad would also be a great addition. For a more hearty meal, you could serve it with some cheesy chicken sliders for the perfect comfort food combo.
12. Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories: 450-500
13. Protein: 20-25g
14. Fat: 35-40g
15. Carbohydrates: 15-20g
16. Please note: Nutritional information is an estimate and can vary based on specific ingredients and brands used.
17. Storage and Leftover Tips: This soup is fantastic for meal prep! Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3-4 days. To reheat, warm it gently on the stovetop over low heat, stirring occasionally. If it has thickened too much, you can add a splash of milk or broth to thin it out. Freezing is not recommended as the dairy can separate and change the texture of the soup.
18. More Recipes You Will Love: If you love comforting, easy-to-make meals, you'll definitely want to try these other recipes:
19. My Cajun : Chicken and Sausage Gumbo is another rich and savory soup that's perfect for a cozy night in.
20. For a delicious one-pan dinner, my : Mexican Chicken and Rice Casserole is always a crowd-pleaser.
21. This : Classic Spaghetti Recipe with Homemade Sauce is a time-tested favorite for a reason.
22. For a fantastic appetizer to serve before your meal, my Baked Brie Appetizer is an effortless way to impress.
23. Final Thoughts: This Copycat Panera Bread Broccoli Cheddar Soup is more than just a recipe; it's a bowl of pure, delicious comfort. It's a reminder that with a little effort, you can create something truly special and satisfying right at home. I hope it becomes a staple in your kitchen just as it has in mine.
24. Did you use fresh or frozen broccoli in your soup? Let me know in the comments below!

SWAPS & NOTES

Broccoli: I recommend using fresh broccoli and chopping the florets into small pieces so they get tender and are easy to eat.

You can use frozen broccoli, but it may require a slightly longer cooking time.

Cheese: Sharp cheddar is the key to that classic Panera flavor.

I highly recommend shredding your own cheese from a block, as pre-shredded cheese often contains anti-caking agents that can prevent it from melting smoothly.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Shred Your Own Cheese: This is the most important tip for a silky-smooth, lump-free soup.

Pre-shredded cheese won't melt the same way.

Low and Slow: When adding the cheese, make sure the heat is off.

High heat can cause the cheese to separate and become grainy.

More recipes: [ChefManiac.com](https://chefmaniac.com)

Original recipe: <https://chefmaniac.com/copycat-panera-bread-broccoli-cheddar-soup-the-best-homemade-recipe/>