



Makes: 4-6 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes Bake Time: 25 minutes

Total Time: 30 minutes

## Roasted Broccoli Soup with Melted Cheddar Croutons

- 2 & 1/2 pounds broccoli (whole stalks), ends trimmed
- Olive oil, as needed
- Kosher salt & freshly cracked black pepper
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 large leek, thinly sliced
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped
- 2 tsp za'atar spice blend
- 1 & 1/2 quarts vegetable stock
- 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp minced chives

### Croutons:

- 4 slices fresh grainy bread, about 1/2"-thick
- Olive oil, as needed
- 6 ounces sharp white cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 tsp za'atar spice blend

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Divide the broccoli stalks into florets and stems. Peel the stems, dice them about a 1/2-inch, and set aside. Place the florets onto a sheet pan and drizzle with a generous coating of olive oil. Toss well and spread into an even layer. Season with salt and black pepper. Roast for 20 minutes until slightly charred and tender.

Meanwhile, heat a large Dutch oven (or heavy-bottomed pot) over medium heat. Add the 1/4 cup of olive oil. Add the onions and cook for about 5 minutes until tender. Stir in the leeks and cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic, za'atar, and diced broccoli stems.

Pour in the vegetable stock. Season with salt and black pepper. Bring the liquid to a boil, reduce the

heat to low, and simmer for about 20 minutes until the broccoli stems are tender, stirring occasionally.

Stir in half of the roasted broccoli and lemon juice. Ladle the soup into a blender and blend for 90 seconds until creamy, or use an immersion blender until soup is smooth. Taste and season more if needed. Transfer the soup back to the pot and stir in the remaining roasted broccoli.

For the croutons, place the sliced bread onto a sheet pan. Drizzle with olive oil on both sides. Toast in the oven for 5 minutes. Top each slice with a mound of cheddar cheese. Sprinkle the za'atar over top. Turn the oven to high broil and bake until the cheese is melted & golden (watch closely so they don't burn).

Serve the soup warm with a melted cheddar crouton on top. Garnish with the chives and more black pepper.

Recipe adapted from The Original Dish