Smoky French Onion Soup With Garlic Toasts



Ingredients

- 1.25 kg onions, skin on, cut in half
- 2 whole heads of garlic, cut in half
- 2 litres good quality beef stock
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp finely ground black pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 150g unsalted butter, softened
- 1 baguette, sliced into 1cm slices
- 100g gruyere or mozzarella cheese, grated

Directions

Step 1 – Soak your preferred wood chips for at least one hour before cooking. We recommend apple or pecan chips for this recipe. Alternatively, you could use wood chunks with a charcoal grill.
Step 2 – Heat the BBQ to medium heat (180 - 200°C) with two zone heat. Ensure the inside of the BBQ and grills are clean. If you are using a charcoal grill, place your briquettes or charcoal to one side of the grill, keeping an area clear as a zone of indirect heat. If you are using a gas BBQ, light a burner on one side of the BBQ only. If you are using a Weber Q, have a trivet and convection in place.
Step 3 – Once the BBQ has reached temperature, drain the wood chips and place into a smoker box. Add the smoker box to the BBQ over direct heat (or place the wood chunks directly onto the charcoal). Once the chips or chunks are smoking, place the onion and garlic pieces, cut side up into the BBQ, away from direct heat. Close the BBQ lid and smoke for at least half an hour, or until the onion and garlic flesh has softened. Remove from the BBQ and set aside to cool.
Step 4 – In a large stock pot, bring the beef stock to a gentle simmer. Peel the skin from the onions and discard. Cut the onion into slices and add to the stock. Squeeze the garlic flesh from the bulbs, crush the flesh with a fork and add half to the stock. Add the salt, pepper, bay leaves and most of the thyme, cover the pot and allow to simmer for 30 minutes.
Step 5 – Add the remaining garlic to the butter and mix well. Spread each slice of the baguette with garlic butter and top with the grated cheese. Place the bread slices into the BBQ and cook until the underside of the bread is toasted and the cheese has melted.
Step 6 – Remove the bay leaves from the soup, ladle the soup into bowls and serve topped with garlic toasts and thyme leaves.