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Dad's Classic French Onion Soup

2 pounds onions, thinly sliced

3 chicken bouillon cubes

3 beef bouillon cubes

1/4 cup butter

5 cups boiling water

1 cup Dubonnet (sherry or Marsala can be substituted)

1/8 tsp. pepper

1 tbsp. instant coffee

4 slices toasted or stale baguette

Mozzarella cheese, sliced to cover top of dish (gruyere can be substituted)

Parmesan, grated to sprinkle over top

4 tbsp brandy or cognac

Saute onions in butter until tender. Dissolve the bouillon cubes in two cups of the boiling water. Add the bouillon, remaining water, Dubonnet, pepper and coffee to the onions. Bring mixture to a boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Ladle into individual oven proof bowls. Place a slice of baguette on top of each bowl. Cover with a thick layer of mozzarella. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 20 minutes or until the top is nicely browned. Remove from oven and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Place under the broiler for one minute. Remove from oven. Pour a tablespoon of brandy over each bowl and flambe. This last step is both an elegant presentation but necessary as the brandy adds a bite and another essential layer of complexity to the final flavour of the soup.

Serves four

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