

# Creamy Zucchini and Pumpkin Seed Soup

Start to finish: 45 minutes

Servings: 4

At Restoran August in Varaždin, Croatia, chef Goran Jelušić taught us this simple soup, called krem juha od tikvica sa bučinim košticama. “Krem” means cream, but the soup has no dairy in it. Instead, it gets its richness from toasted pumpkin seeds that are simmered then pureed with tender slices of zucchini; together they yield a silky, velvety texture. Fresh dill and lemon zest lift and brighten the flavors. Our inspiration recipe used pumpkin seed oil; if you can find it, use it in place of the olive oil—it will heighten the nuttiness of the toasted seeds. Vegetable broth and chicken broth work equally well here, so use whichever you prefer.

**Don’t overcook the zucchini.** A brief simmer is key for vivid flavor and color. Be sure to blend the soup mixture in batches. If the blender jar is too full, the burst of steam may loosen the lid and cause splattering.

—Diane Unger

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil or pumpkin seed oil  
1 cup raw pumpkin seeds  
1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced  
Kosher salt and ground black pepper  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 pounds zucchini, trimmed, halved lengthwise and cut into ½-inch pieces (7 cups)  
1 bunch fresh dill, stems and leaves chopped, reserved separately  
1 quart low-sodium vegetable or chicken broth  
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest, plus 1 lemon cut into wedges  
Crème fraîche, to serve (optional)

**In a large Dutch oven** over medium, combine the oil and pumpkin seeds. Cook, stirring often, until fragrant and lightly toasted, about 5 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a small bowl; set aside.

**To the pot over medium**, add the onion and ½ teaspoon salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not browned, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the flour and cook, stirring constantly, until evenly moistened, about 1 minute. Add the zucchini and dill stems, stirring well, then stir in the broth and ⅔ cup of the toasted pumpkin seeds. Bring to a boil over medium-high, then reduce to medium and cook, uncovered and stirring, at a vigorous simmer, until the zucchini is translucent, 5 to 10 minutes.

**Remove the pot from the heat** and cool for 5 minutes. Using a blender and working in batches so the jar is never more than half full, puree until smooth; transfer each batch to a large bowl.

**Wipe out the pot**, then pour in the puree. Cook over low, stirring often, until heated through, about 5 minutes. Off heat, stir in the dill leaves and lemon zest, then taste and season with salt

and pepper. Ladle the soup into bowls, dollop with crème fraîche (if using) and sprinkle with the remaining  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup pumpkin seeds. Serve with lemon wedges.