

## Paul Bertolli's Cauliflower Soup

Serves 8

3 Tablespoons olive oil  
1 medium onion (6 ounces), sliced thin  
1 head very fresh cauliflower (about 1 ½ pounds), broken into florets  
Salt, to taste  
5 ½ cups water, divided  
Extra virgin olive oil, to taste  
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste



Warm the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed pan. Sweat the onion in the olive oil over low heat without letting it brown for 15 minutes.

Add the cauliflower, salt to taste, and 1/2 cup water. Raise the heat slightly, cover the pot tightly and stew the cauliflower for 15 to 18 minutes, or until tender. Then add another 4 1/2 cups hot water, bring to a low simmer and cook an additional 20 minutes uncovered.

Working in batches, purée the soup in a blender to a very smooth, creamy consistency. Let the soup stand for 20 minutes. In this time it will thicken slightly.

Thin the soup with 1/2 cup hot water. Reheat the soup. Serve hot, drizzled with a thin stream of extra-virgin olive oil and freshly ground black pepper.

This soup might seem plain, but trust us. Paul Bertolli, who was at the helm of Chez Panisse and Oliveto for over 20 years, knows exactly how to make a vegetable become the best it can be. This recipe comes from *Cooking by Hand*, Bertolli's IACP award-winning book of recipes and essays, and makes for a soup that's delicate, sweet, and smooth as a flannel scarf.