Broccoli Soup

Ingredients  
  
4 tablespoons butter, room temperature  
1 1/2 pounds fresh broccoli  
1 large onion, chopped  
1 carrot, chopped  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth  
1/2 cup cream  
Homemade Croutons, recipe follows  
Homemade Croutons:  
Day old French bread  
Olive oil  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes  
Directions  
  
Melt 4 tablespoons butter in heavy medium pot over medium-high heat. Add broccoli, onion, carrot, salt and pepper and saute until onion is translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the flour and cook for 1 minute, until the flour reaches a blonde color. Add stock and bring to boil.  
  
Simmer uncovered until broccoli is tender, about 15 minutes. Pour in cream. With an immersion blender, puree the soup. Add salt and pepper, to taste, and then replace the lid back on the pot. Serve hot with Homemade Croutons.  
  
Homemade Croutons:  
Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.  
  
Cut bread into cubes and place in a large bowl. Drizzle cubes with olive oil, salt, pepper and red pepper flakes. Mix well.  
  
Spread seasoned bread onto a sheet pan and bake for about 15 minutes.  
  
Yield: 4 to 6 servings  
  
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