

Best of Kansas City

## Best Soup

### French Onion Soup at Café Provence

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Too many Midwestern restaurants serve a sorry excuse for the classic *potage français d'oignon*: watery, flavorless and usually blanketed with stringy mozzarella or provolone cheese. At Café Provence, French-born Patrick Quillec insists on preparing his soup in the proper manner. He caramelizes white onions -- "They're not as sweet as the yellow onions," Quillec says -- with butter and smoked bacon, then cooks the onions in a rich beef stock that's also made in the Café Provence kitchen. For the stock, Quillec uses beef bones and the trimmings from his beef dishes, including the filet mignon, then simmers it slowly for six or seven hours with onion, carrots and celery. This robust and invigorating soup is then topped with thin slices of dry bread -- "Too thick or too soft bread absorbs all the liquid," Quillec notes -- and generously covered with freshly grated gruyere. "The cheese has to be grated right before it goes on the soup or it loses much of its flavor," he explains. It's the best-selling soup at Café Provence in any season.

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