Jacques's Onion Soup Gratinée

http://userealbutter.com/2010/01/04/french-onion-soup-recipe/
Julia and Jacques, Cooking at Home

2 tbsps oil
1 tbsp butter
1.5 lbs. onions, peeled and thinly sliced (about 5 cups)
1 tsp fresh thyme sprigs, minced (or 1/2 tsp dried)
1/2 tsp salt, or more to taste
5 cups hot chicken stock (I used beef), homemade or low-sodium canned
1/4 tsp black pepper, freshly ground
1/4 cup red or white wine (optional)

for each crock of onion soup gratinée
3-4 slices of baguette, about 1/4-inch thick cut on the diagonal
2-2.5 oz Gruyère or Emmentaler cheese, grated (about 3/4 cup)

Heat the oil and butter in a heavy 3- or 4-quart saucepan over medium-low heat. When the butter is melted, add the onions, thyme, and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Stir together well. Cover the pan and cook for about 10 minutes. Give it a stir from time to time. When the onions are tender, remove the lid and increase the heat to medium. Cook another 20-25 minutes, stirring often, until the onions have caramelized (dark golden color). You can reduce the heat if the onions look like they may burn. Meanwhile, heat the stock in another pot. When the stock is hot and the onions are caramelized, stir the stock into the onions and bring the soup to a boil. Taste and adjust seasonings adding salt, pepper, and wine if you like. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Toast a dozen or so baguette slices on a baking sheet in a 400°F oven until crisp and starting to turn golden (10 minutes). When the soup is ready, place the croutons (whole or broken) into the bottom of each oven-safe crock and sprinkle 2 tablespoons of cheese on top. Arrange the crocks on the baking sheet. Ladle in a cup or more of soup to about 1/4 inch from the rim. Mound grated cheese all over the surface of the soup to cover. Repeat for each crock. Place the baking sheet with all the crocks in the oven for 30 to 40 minutes until the cheese turns golden and crusts over the soup. Move the crocks carefully onto individual plates and serve. Makes 5-6 small crocks.