

# Return to the good old days with soup

The "good old days" in grandma's kitchen usually are remembered in one of two ways. Those with an eye for the practical question if the results really merited the long hours of hard work under difficult conditions. But the romantics remember the marvelous aromas, delicious flavors and the loving care that went into the preparation.

Probably the one dish that best captures these nostalgic memories is homemade soup. Just the mention of it brings visions of grandma fussing over a huge kettle of soup that had been simmering lazily for hours on the back of the range.

Fortunately for today's homemaker, it is still possible to create a soup with all the goodness of grandma's but without all the work. Pot O' Flavor is hearty beef, barley and vegetable fare that blends the quality of the past with the convenience of the present.

Preparation starts simply as beef shank cross cuts simmer in water without preliminary browning. Then the soup begins to take shape quickly with the help of easy-to-use onion soup mix. The mix, supplemented with sage and peppercorns, gives the soup a quick flavor boost. Barley and vegetables — carrots, celery and cabbage — are added during the gentle cooking, and the flavors merge and develop.

Come serving time, the results will speak for themselves — an old-fashioned soup brimming with flavor and a modern-day cook bearing with pride.

**POT O' FLAVOR**  
3 lbs. beef shank cross cuts, cut 1 inch thick  
1 tsp. salt  
7 cups water

- 1 pkg. (1 1/4 oz.) onion soup mix
- 1/2 cup regular barley or 1/2 cup quick-cooking barley
- 6 whole peppercorns
- 1 tsp. rubbed sage
- 1 1/2 cups thinly sliced carrots
- 1 cup celery pieces
- 4 cups thinly sliced cabbage

Place shanks in water in large Dutch oven or pot. Season with salt and add water. Cover tightly and cook slowly 1 1/2 hours. Add soup mix, barley, peppercorns and sage and continue cooking 40 minutes. Add carrots, celery and cabbage and continue cooking 30-40 minutes or until meat is tender and vegetables are done.

If quick-cooking barley is used, add to soup with the vegetables.

Homemade beef soup is an especially good menu choice on chilly early spring days as it offers a wealth of good eating and good nutrition at minimum expense. Beef shanks, less tender and therefore less in demand, are priced just right for a tight budget. Yet they become tender and delicious when cooked gently in liquid for a long period of time.

The perfect partner for old-fashioned soup is hot-from-the-oven homemade bread. You may want to make the bread from scratch as grandma might have done. Or take a convenient shortcut with a packaged bread mix or a frozen or refrigerated loaf that needs only baking. Just add a crisp green salad and a custard dessert, and the meal is complete. From first bite to last, all are sure to agree that even in the "good old days" dinner could have never tasted better.



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# Steak still most popular meal in restaurants

"I'll have a steak" is the most popular order given by Americans when dining out, reports the National Live Stock and Meat Board. According to a recent Gallup survey, steak is the favorite choice of American adults and teens, both male and female, in all parts of the country.

Respondents to an adult survey were asked which they would order — steak, shrimp, chicken or veal — if all were priced the same. Almost half (45 percent) of the adults responded that they would order steak. Although steak was the preferred choice of both men and women, men were more likely to choose steak. It was also found that steak was the most popular in the Midwest and South.

Teens like steak, too. In a youth survey, teens were asked what they would order if offered a free dinner at the best restaurant in town. Steak was the top choice of 61 percent of the teens surveyed.



# Check variety in Easter hams

Ham is the traditional choice for the Easter feast, and there's a wide variety of hams from which to choose. They include bone-in hams such as whole hams. Shank and rump (butt) portions, halves that have had the center slices removed, are also available as are semi-boneless hams.

Increasing in popularity are easy-to-serve boneless hams that have had all bones removed and most of the external and internal fat trimmed. Canned hams are boneless hams that have been placed in cans, vacuum-sealed, then fully cooked.

When deciding which style of ham to buy, consider price per serving rather than price per pound. In general, allow five servings per pound for boneless or canned hams, 3 1/2 to 4 servings per pound for semi-boneless hams and three to 3 1/2 servings per pound for bone-in hams. Second helpings and leftovers for budget-stretching eaters should also be considered when deciding what size ham to buy.

# Fats aren't all bad

Fats are often the subject of consumer criticism, but it should be remembered that they are dietary essentials.

They supply needed fatty acids, carry vitamins A, E and K and are a concentrated source of energy. Meat fat is complete, containing all three forms of fat — mono, poly and saturated.

Without fats, foods wouldn't taste as good and wouldn't satisfy the appetite for as long. Fats also are responsible for many of the characteristic flavors, aromas and textures found in food. They give a feeling of satisfaction.

Because fats are the most concentrated source of food energy (calories), they should be included in the diet in moderation, however.

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