

Creamy, puréed vegetable soup a delicious one pot meal

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Compared to paella and gazpacho, dishes from the Canary Islands — two provinces of Spain off the northwestern coast of Africa — don't make a blip on our culinary radar screen.

But when introduced to Potaje de Berros, a creamy, puréed vegetable soup that's hearty and dairy-free, you will be amazed to learn it is a staple dish of this sub-tropical archipelago.

Another pleasant surprise about this flavorful soup is that it contains tomatoes, carrots and potatoes, leafy watercress and sweet corn.

Today, agriculture and tourism are the main businesses of the Canaries. Brushed by temperate breezes, these volcanic islands have always lured sailors because of their location. Early explorers made them the last stop before heading to the New World and the first stop on the way back. That explains why, according to Theresa Barrenchen, author of "The Baque Table" and expert on regional Spanish recipes, this soup contains so many foods discovered in the New World and brought to the Old World, including toma-

POTAJE DE BERROS (PURÉED VEGETABLE SOUP)

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 small onion, chopped
1 small garlic clove, sliced
2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
2 small carrots, chopped
1 cup chopped, peeled butternut squash
1 medium potato, peeled and chopped
1 bunch watercress, including stems, coarsely chopped
2 cups reduced-salt chicken broth
Salt and pepper to taste
2/3 cup cooked fresh or frozen corn kernels

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Sauté onion, garlic and tomatoes until tomatoes resemble a chunky purée, about 12 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add carrots, squash, potato, watercress and chicken broth. Simmer, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Add 4 cups water. Return to boil and simmer uncovered until vegetables are very soft, about 10 minutes. Let soup sit 15 minutes to cool slightly.

Purée soup, including all solids. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and garnish with corn kernels. (The boiling hot soup heats the corn, eliminating the need to cook it separately before adding.)

Nutritional information: Makes 6 servings, each containing 126 calories and 6 grams of fat.

atoes, squash, potatoes and corn.

Besides offering a bold flavor that is pleasantly hard to define, the ingredients in Potaje de Berros are a veritable one-dish blend of all the vegetable families we should eat — red and orange, yellow and green, root and leafy. Few dishes could

make eating all of them together more appealing or easier.

Once you have sated the tomatoes with onions and garlic, it is simply a matter of tossing more vegetables into the pot to simmer, puréeing the soup and, at the very end, adding the corn to serve as croutons.



Soup's on: Potaje de Berros is a creamy, puréed vegetable soup that's hearty and dairy-free.

For the best possible texture, Barrenchen, whose recipe is the basis for this version, uses a food mill to produce a smoother,

orange-colored purée.

Dana Jacobi is the author of

"The Joy of Soy" and recipe creator for the American Institute for Cancer Research's book "Stopping Cancer Before It Starts."

Famie from page D1

"Some people craved things like peanut butter and jelly sandwiches," says Famie. "I'd be craving things like roast lobster or a poached salmon with a dill mustard sauce. My cravings got real creative."

Did being a chef help him get cast in *Survivor*?

"Oh sure. There's no question that it had something to do with it. What people do for a living, I'm sure, affects that."

What did he expect to gain

from the experience?

"I thought of it as an extreme challenge. You're thrown in the middle of nowhere and you have to scrounge for food. I like that kind of living on the edge."

Suddenly, the cell connection dissolves and Famie has to call back. "I was in an elevator," he explains.

Can't talk about that

Unfortunately, the change in environment seems to have affected Famie's willingness to talk. His answers shorten. To many questions — what about the rice, for instance — he replies "I can't talk about that."

I think that all of us — I'm talking for chefs as a group in general — feel excited, happy and fortunate. On the other hand, what we do is very entertaining. It's a form of entertainment.

Keith Famie
Chef

What about the uses of his luxury item, the chef's pan?

"I can't talk about that. I'd love to, but I can't," he says.

Seconds later, another interruption.

"Nice to meet you," Famie's voice is directed to someone out-

side the wireless connection. Conceivably, there's a handshake, maybe even a giggling female in a Navy blue suit on her way for a coffee break.

"I'm back," says Famie. "Did you get the stuff about the book party?" he inquires, apparently bored with question-and-answer

time and ponderous ideas like the synthesis of cooking and entertainment.

Media cooking forums

He does, however, say it's exciting. The Food Network and other media cooking forums — even his own local show on WDIV television — help elevate the industry while educating audiences about cooking and food.

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Published: March 23 and 25, 2001

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Wine from page D1

accents, but an overt lemon tartness in the finish pushed it to an unbalanced acid side, even for enjoyment with fish.

With more obvious oak, but still not over the top, 1999 Pétzner Barrel Select \$13 and 1998 Navarro Vineyards \$14 were best. 1998 Jepson Estate Select \$15 was simple and lacked a charm found in other wines. A slightly sweet finish in the 1999 Lolonia \$18 was distracting and not well-designed for food.

Price that's hard to beat

The 1998 Parducci Vineyard Select \$10 was a little thin, but hard to beat at the price. The 1999 Milone Family Winery Sanel Valley Vineyard \$19 was coarse with an unpleasant finish.

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The flawed and oxidized character of the 1998 Froy Chardonnay \$12 indicates that some wineries have a way to go in the organic arena.

The Healds are Troy residents

who write about wine, spirits, food, and dining for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 1864#.

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