

Cookbooks offer generous helpings of soup ideas

(AP) For any time of year, there's some kind of soup or stew that is the perfect choice for a menu.

If you're inspired to see what soup ideas you can find in cookbooks, here are some recent titles — they are a small sampling from the huge body of literature focusing on the soup-stew theme.

The Culinary Institute of America Book of Soups (Lebhar-Friedman Books, \$36, 2001). Edited by Mary Donovan and Jennifer S. Armentrout, this book offers more than 100 new recipes from the CIA, in handsome format, its helpfully formulated text interleaved with fine color photos.

"From the most delicate broth, through rib-sticking purees, and on to light, cool fruit soups, it is possible to find a soup to suit nearly any menu," the editors write in their introduction.

They also point out, encouragingly, that "Most soup recipes are extremely adaptable, and can be easily adjusted to meet

the needs of the moment, particularly when you need to improvise ingredients."

So the choice is yours: Follow their carefully written recipes — or, if you're in the mood, take off on your own.

The reference to rib-sticking purees is exemplified in the following recipe. "The bacon and ham hock add a traditional smoky flavor to this thick and heart-warming puree of vegetable and split peas," the head note says. "However, if you prefer a meatless version, omit the bacon and ham hock, substitute vegetable broth for the chicken broth, and replace the bacon fat with vegetable oil."

PUREE OF SPLIT PEA SOUP

- 4 strips bacon, minced
- 1 medium onion, diced (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 1 carrot, diced (about 1/3 cup)
- 1 celery stalk, diced (about 1/2 cup)

- 1 leek, white and light-green part, diced (about 1 1/4 cups)
- 6 cups chicken broth
- 2 yellow or white potatoes, peeled and diced (about 2 cups)
- 1/2 pound split green or yellow peas, or lentils
- 1 smoked ham hock

Sachet: 1 bay leaf, 1 whole clove, 1 garlic clove, 4 or 5 peppercorns, enclosed in a large tea ball, or tied in a cheesecloth pouch
Salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
1 cup croutons

Cook the bacon in a soup pot over medium-high heat until crisp and brown. Remove the bacon with a slotted spoon; drain on paper towels and set aside. Pour off all but 3 tablespoons of the bacon fat. Add the onion, carrot, celery and leek; stir to evenly coat with fat.

Cover the pot and cook the vegetables over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is tender and translucent, 6 to 8 minutes.

Add the broth, potatoes, peas and ham hock. Bring to a simmer and cook over medium heat, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the sachet and simmer until the split peas are soft, about 30 minutes. Skim away any scum that may have formed during simmering.

Remove the sachet and discard. Remove the ham hock and set aside to cool. When cool enough to handle, cut the ham off the bone, dice, and set aside. Strain the soup through a sieve, reserving the liquid. Puree the solids and return them to the pot. Add enough of the reserved liquid to achieve a thick consistency. Blend well. Stir in the ham and bacon. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in heated bowls, garnished with croutons.

Makes 8 servings.
The Best Recipe: Soups and

Stews (Boston Common Press, \$29.95, 2001), by the editors of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine, is the result of massive research.

According to the book jacket blurb, to find the best cream of tomato soup, chicken paprikash and New England fish stew, among other classics, "the staff of *Cook's Illustrated* magazine simmered more than 6,000 pots of soup and stew." The tests included checking out 30 recipes for bouillabaisse, and 65 for beef stew.

Along with 200 recipes for the most successful versions of the soups and stews, the book has detailed illustrations showing how to cut, shape and mince ingredients, plus equipment ratings and taste tests of supermarket foods — all of which are the magazine's stock-in-trade. *All About Soups & Stews* (Scraper, \$19.95, 2000), by Irma S. Rombauer, Marion Rombauer Becker and Ethan Becker, is one of a *Joy of Cooking* series, with separate volumes focusing on single topics. (Other titles are

"Chicken," "Pasta" and "Vegetables.")

The book combines some 130 recipes adapted from the latest edition of *Joy of Cooking* with 150 color photographs specially commissioned for this volume. The result is clear and user-friendly.

The Big Book of Soups & Stews (Chronicle Books, \$19.95 paperback, 2001), by Maryana Vollstadt, has 282 recipes for "serious comfort food."

The writer describes the collection as "a variety of practical, savory soups and stews for all occasions," and says they include many traditional and classic recipes that have been updated and streamlined for today's home cook.

Soup's On (Lyons Press, \$18.95, 2001) by Janet Lembke, promises 60 hearty soups "you can stand your spoon in." A pleasant selection of soups, accompanied by anecdotes and back stories, illustrated with color photos.

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many who attended the event did not hesitate to come up to us and say, "I read you all the time. Do you want to know what I liked best?" They thought Big Rock Chop & Brew House (Birmingham) had awesome marin-

ed, grilled beef tenderloin with house chop sauce, matched with 2001 Penfolds Rawson Retreat Cabernet-Shiraz. They praised the original Crews Inn (Harrison Township) creation of Tuna Salmon Tempura in a Sushi Roll

paired with the 2000 Joseph Phelps Sauvignon Blanc. Readers also thought the nicely-kicked up Creole Shrimp and Avocado Salad, presented by McCormick & Schmick (Troy), with the 1999 Flora Springs

Sangiovese was a daring wine pairing that worked.

In reading this, did you catch that the winning wine pairings were both white wines, not red? And from the same grape variety? Pinot grigio is Italian for

pinot gris, which is French. The wine styles are different and that's what made the matches.

Get involved next year

If you're not on the list to receive advance notice for the 2003 Michigan Culinary Food & Wine Extravaganza event, phone (689)463-8660, ext. 429 or 437

and get your name on the list to receive your invitation early.

The *Healds* are Troy residents who write about wine, spirits, food, and restaurants for the *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*. To leave them a voice mail message, dial (734) 953-2047, mailbox 1864H.

Chefs cook up benefit dinner to aid colleague

Master Chef Milos Cihelka will come out of retirement to join with eight other chefs to prepare a benefit dinner for Chef Joseph Yeziek, formerly of the Epic Restaurant Group. Yeziek, who has been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, has undergone extensive chemotherapy treatments to help battle the cancer. Unfortunately, Yeziek is too ill to work and does not have insurance to help cover the costs of the treatments.

Executive Chef Shawn Loving of Loving Spoonful has gathered

nine of the most talented chefs in the Metro Detroit area to prepare a Dinner Extraordinaire benefit to help raise monies for Yeziek and his family. The benefit will be held at Loving Spoonful in Farmington Hills, Monday, Feb. 25 at 6:30 p.m. The all-inclusive menu is \$125 per person.

Joining Chefs Milos and Loving are Executive Chef Brian Polcyn, Five Lakes Grill; Master Chef Dan Hugel; Master Pastry Chef Joe Decker; Executive Chef and Director of Culinary Arts at Schoolcraft College Bruce Konowalow; Master Chef Jeff Gabriel; Master Chef Kevin Gawronski, and Executive Chef Chris Misiak.

"I'm thrilled to be in the company of these masters and to be doing something good for someone," Chef Loving said. "Everyone is donating their time and 100 percent of the profits will go to Joe."

Call (248) 489-9400 for reservations. Donations accepted.

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