

taste buds
chef Larry
Janes



Cauldron stockpot for soup

I knew the minute I walked in the house.

There was this incredible aroma, wafting through the rooms, an aroma intense with herbs, onion, garlic and the faint detection of wine.

No, we weren't being visited by a sloshed farmer. Mama was in the mood to make soup. And make soup she did.

I'll never forget that half of the freezer was always set aside for Baggies and Tupperware filled with salvaged vegetables and loads of meat trimmings and bones. What seemed to be a witch's cauldron that must have made about five gallons was brought up from the fruit cellar. It was a heavy cast-iron pot with a hinged handle that had seen many a day of hearty chills, thick sauces, medicinal chicken soups and nutritious stews. Delicious soups rich in vitamins and minerals can be made by imitating the French, famous for their soups. Before fresh vegetables are added, stock rich in flavor should be prepared. The more vegetables and bones you use in making stock, the more delicious the soup will be.

By the way, after making the stock, strain the bones and vegetables and discard. The vegetables become very mushy and watery. I always keep an extra bag of onions, celery and carrots for the making of the soup. You can make stock from just about anything. All vegetable trimmings, tops of green onions, wilted and outer leaves of lettuce and cabbage and even the seeds from squash and peppers can be thrown in the pot for added flavor.

UNLESS YOUR final product must be of one identity (like beef stock) just throw a mish-mash of chicken bones, beef bones, veal bones, even the trimmings from blade cuts and roasts. Ham bones and hocks are additional treasures that can speak for themselves.

Purpose in making soup stock is to break down the connective tissues in the bones and thereby extract minerals, flavors and unrefined gelatin. All well-made soup stocks are rich in calcium. A healthy shot of vinegar added to the boiling mélange will increase the calcium levels and hasten the breakdown of tissue and even aid in the withdrawal of more flavor from the bones in a shorter cooking time.

Don't worry about the taste because, as the stock is boiled, the calcium will combine with the acid and the taste of vinegar will disappear!

A frequent question that always pops up at my soup-making seminars is what causes the stock to turn a rich brown color. To achieve this, first dredge the bones and meat with flour and then sear in hot oil until brown.

Speaking of adding meat, it is desirable to add meat when making stock, but this will usually result in meat that becomes stringy and lacks flavor. Straps and trimmings go into my stock and they are strained out at the end. Then, if needed, additional stew meat, pre-baked chicken or veal can be added about 30 minutes before serving.

I CAN THEN add my herbs, such as a bay leaf and crushed peppercorns. Be on the watch for the bay leaf. Safety alerts are out because people have been known to swallow them and lacerate their throat.

Fresh chopped parsley and pinches of marjoram, thyme, basil and savory make the final product even tastier and more aromatic. Just before the traditional ladling of the hot brew into the crocks, an optional splash of vermouth, burgundy or chianti adds a subtle richness that smells as good as it tastes.

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Chasing the chill

BLACK BEAN SOUP

1 pound turtle (black) beans, soaked
9 cups chicken stock
2 onions, chopped
4 medium carrots, chopped
3 cloves garlic put through press
2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon thyme
1 six-ounce can tomato paste
2 teaspoons ground cumin
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1 box frozen spinach, thawed

Place soaked beans in large pot. Add chicken stock, onion, carrots, garlic, bay leaves, thyme, tomato paste, cumin and cayenne pepper. Heat to boil then reduce heat and simmer for 2 hours. Add spinach and stir. Adjust seasonings. Let soup cool, then puree in a blender or food processor. Reheat to serve.

By Etzel Simmons
staff writer

WINTERTIME entertainment needn't be a chore. One of the easiest ways to get together with friends is to invite them over for a soup party.

Almost any time of the day is great for serving soup, along with interesting breads, rolls and crackers. A colorful salad and/or a simple dessert completes the menu. To make the event even more fun, offer a selection of soups and use small bowls so that guests may sample a variety.

Vary the soups so that you have one cream-based soup, one with beans, another vegetable-based and so on. If there are slim-down diets in the crowd, people on heart-beating diets or who want to lose weight, each soup should be a low-calorie feature.

Serve the soups in all kinds of containers. Tureens are always impressive, although they don't have to be fancy ones. The covered tureen keeps the soup hot and the soup ladle handy.

CHOCKPOTS ARE terrific for cooking soups and serving them easily in the same container, at the perfect temperature. Chafing dishes add a touch of elegance. Soups made, or poured into microwave-safe casseroles, can be popped back into the microwave for fast reheating.

A soup party can be done at the house or at a restaurant. Homemade soups, casseroles and chafing dishes are a nice accompaniment to a party. A buffet table with a variety of soups, breads, rolls and salads is a sure winner.

MUSHROOM POTATO SOUP

5 tablespoons butter, divided
2 leeks (or onions), chopped
2 large carrots, chopped
6-8 cups chicken broth
1 tablespoon fresh dill, chopped
or 2 teaspoons dill weed
2 teaspoons salt
dash pepper
1 bay leaf
5 cups potatoes, peeled and sliced
1 pound mushrooms, sliced
1 cup half and half or light cream
4 tablespoons flour

Saute leeks and carrots in 3 tablespoons butter until soft. Add remaining ingredients through potatoes. Simmer 20 minutes. Remove bay leaf. Melt remaining butter (use more if needed). Saute mushrooms until golden. Sprinkle flour over mushrooms 2 tablespoons at a time; blend well. Add cream, stir until thickened. Combine mushroom and potato mixture, blend well.

15-BEAN SOUP

20 ounce package 15-bean mixture
2 large onions, chopped
2 cloves garlic, chopped
2 teaspoons chili powder
dash of oregano
1/2 lemon
ham bone or smoked ham hock
1 large can tomatoes
2 teaspoons salt

Wash beans, place in pot. Cover with water, add 2 teaspoons salt. Soak overnight. Drain, add 2 quarts water. Add ham bone or hock. Bring to boil, simmer 3 hours. Add onions, tomatoes, chili powder, oregano and garlic. Simmer 1 hour. Just before serving squeeze lemon into soup.

Some prepared 15-bean mixtures come with a package of seasoning. It contains MSG and artificial smoke. It's not needed.

CABBAGE SOUP

1 small red cabbage
2 cups celery, chopped
1 1/2 tablespoons onion flakes
2 packets artificial sweetener (4 teaspoons)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
46 ounces tomato juice
46 ounces water
4 beef or chicken bouillon cubes
4 carrots, sliced
salt and pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients in a large pot; simmer 1 hour. Refrigerate at least 24 hours before heating to serve. (8 servings)

CREAM OF MUSHROOM

1/2 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
1 onion, chopped
1/4 cup butter
1/4 cup flour
4 cups chicken or beef stock
1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup milk
salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Fry mushrooms with onions in butter 5 minutes. Add flour and blend. Cool slightly; add cream and milk. Season to taste with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Heat and serve immediately. (Serves 8 to 10)
Half and half can be used instead of the cream and milk.
Beef broth gives the soup a hearty taste. Chicken broth gives it a light taste.

(Above) Mushroom-Potato Soup is one of the soups featured at the Observer & Eccentric's second annual soup party. Recipes for five soups from the party are given on this page.

Fresh baked: How sweet it is at Cozy Cafe

By Arlene Funke
special writer

Follow your nose to the Cozy Cafe in Plymouth.

Loyal customers flock to devour the Cozy's mammoth walnut-raisin sweet rolls, succulent carrot cake and unusual quiches baked on the premises.

"It's always the freshest of product, and I think that's the secret to our success," said co-owner Tina Ristlich of Southfield.

Ristlich strives for a "just-like-home" atmosphere for the Cozy Cafe, which she and her husband, Nick, took over seven years ago. Their philosophy — which has served them well — is to offer a limited selection of tasty, out-of-the-ordinary entrees.

"When people come from Grosse Ile, they're not looking for an egg salad sandwich," said Ristlich. "They want something a little different."

The result is a mouth-watering array of crepes and quiches, interesting salads and generous servings of pies, cakes and other assorted sweets.

Step into the entrance of the

Cozy Cafe, in the Forest Place Mall off Ann Arbor Trail west of Main Street, and you will immediately inhale the cinnamon-laced aroma of the restaurant's famed walnut-raisin sweet rolls.

"We like to give our clients what they like," Ristlich said, noting that it's first-come, first-served on the popular rolls.

THE RESTAURANT resists the pleadings of customers who want large takeout orders. She wants to make sure there is a sufficient quantity for customers who like to linger over a cup of coffee while enjoying the sweet rolls.

"I wouldn't want them to be disappointed," Ristlich said.

Special takeout orders of whole pies, cakes and other items may be done by prior arrangement.

The name, Cozy Cafe, isn't a cute affectation. Before it was enlarged, a few years ago, the restaurant seated only 45 people and customers had to back out the door to pay during crowded times. Current seating capacity is 87.

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Walnut-raisin sweet roll is a customer favorite at the Cozy Cafe in Plymouth. Co-owner Tina Ristlich of Southfield sometimes has to ration carry-out orders of the popular, gigantic rolls.

Try cafe's roll, pie recipes

COZY CAFE WALNUT-RAISIN SWEET ROLLS

Melt together:
1/4 cup butter
1 cup milk

Mix in large bowl:
3 eggs, beaten
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt

Add to eggs:
2 cups flour
milk and butter

Soften in 1/4 cup warm water:
1 (1/4 ounce) package yeast
1 teaspoon sugar

Add yeast to flour, egg and milk mixture after yeast begins to bubble. Mix well and add two or more cups flour until a soft, sticky dough is formed. Allow to rise at least one hour. Bake at 350 degrees 15-20 minutes.

Sweet Rolls

Roll dough into circle. Sprinkle with desired amount of cinnamon. Sprinkle with approximately two cups brown sugar. Cut into eight

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