

QUICK SOUPS FOR BUSY COOKS

JANUARY 2000

January is Soup Month! What a wonderful time to enjoy a comfort food. In selecting soups for this flier, I tried to consider these factors:

1. Not all of us have time to prepare soup from scratch.
2. If we use canned soups, they are often quite high in sodium – a problem for some.
3. If the weather DOES get nasty, not all of us can get to the store to buy fresh ingredients every day so we must rely on ingredients in the pantry or freezer.

The selections offered here include soups that are quick and easy to prepare, nutritious, and can be easy on your “after-the-holidays” food budget. I hope you’ll enjoy adding some of them to your list of favorite comfort foods. Jan Temple

CASSEROLE SAUCE MIX (Makes 9 ‘cans’ of soup)

This is a great way to cut back on the amount of sodium found in canned soups. Use it as you would any canned cream soup. Feel free to modify the herbs to suit your personal preference.

- 2 cups instant nonfat dry milk crystals
- ¾ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup reduced sodium chicken bouillon
- 2 tablespoons dried onion flakes
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme, crushed
- ½ teaspoon basil, crushed
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Combine all ingredients and store in airtight container.

To use as a substitute for one can condensed soup, mix 1/3-cup dry mix and 1 ¼ cups water in saucepan. Cook and stir until thickened.

NOTE: In my experience, it’s best to NOT reconstitute this in the microwave because it boils over very easily. The stovetop is really the best method.



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CHICKEN TORTILLA CHOWDER (8-10 servings)

- 3 cups water
- 2 teaspoons reduced sodium chicken bouillon
- 1/3 cup “Casserole Sauce Mix”¹
- 1 can condensed cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 ½ cups skim milk
- 1 can (10 oz.) chunk white chicken, drained
- 1 can (11 oz.) Mexicorn
- 1 can (15 oz.) mixed vegetables, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (4.5 oz) mushroom pieces
- 1 can (4 oz.) chopped green chilies
- ¼ cup thinly sliced green onions
- 4 flour tortillas (6-7 inches) cut into ½ inch strips
- 1 cup (4 oz.) reduced fat shredded cheddar cheese

In a Dutch oven or soup kettle, combine water, bouillon, sauce mix, soup and milk. Add the chicken, corn, vegetables, mushrooms, chilies and onions; mix well. Bring to a boil. Add the tortilla strips. Reduce heat: simmer, uncovered, for 8-10 minutes or until heated through. Add cheese; stir just until melted. Serve immediately.

(Adapted from Quick Cooking, July/August 1998)

TORTELLINI SOUP (10-12 servings)

- 1 quart water
- 2 cans (15 oz. each) Italian stewed tomatoes
- 1 can condensed French onion soup, undiluted
- 2 cups broccoli coleslaw mix
- 2 cups green beans (canned or frozen)
- 2 cups frozen cheese tortellini
- Grated Parmesan cheese, optional

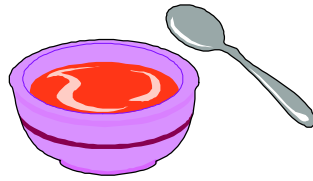
In a Dutch oven or large kettle, combine water, tomatoes, soup, coleslaw mix and beans. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Uncover; add tortellini. Cook for 3-5 minutes or until pasta is tender. Garnish with Parmesan cheese if desired. **NOTE:** 3 cups cooked pasta of any kind may be substituted for the tortellini.

(Adapted from Quick Cooking, May/June 1998)

¹ If you don’t use Casserole Sauce Mix, decrease water to 2 cups, and add 1 can condensed cream of potato soup.

LENTIL CHILI SOUP (8 1-cup servings)

1 ½ teaspoons vegetable oil
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
2 cups chopped onion (frozen works fine)
1 pound frozen crinkle cut carrots
12 oz. dry lentils (1 ½ cups)
4 cups low sodium V-8 juice
5 cups water
½ teaspoon chili powder
½ teaspoon cumin
1 teaspoon dried oregano



Place the vegetable oil in a large soup pot or Dutch oven. Heat over medium-high heat. Add the garlic and onion and sauté until golden, about 2-3 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients and mix well. Bring to a boil then lower heat to simmer. Cook uncovered until the lentils are tender, about 35-45 minutes. Serve hot. NOTE: You may add more or less chili powder to suit your personal taste preference.

(From Communicating Food for Health, January 2000)

ZESTY CHEESE SOUP (6-8 servings)

1 can (15 oz) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 oz.) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
1 can (14.5 oz) chicken broth
OR 2 cups water and 2 tsp. Low-sodium bouillon
1 can (10 oz.) diced tomatoes & green chilies, undrained
1 can (10 oz.) chicken, drained
1 can (4.5 oz) chopped green chilies
½ pound processed American cheese, cubed
Crushed tortilla chips, optional

In a 3-qt. saucepan, combine the first seven ingredients. Cook and stir until cheese is melted. Garnish with tortilla chips if desired.

(Adapted from Quick Cooking, November/December 1998)

QUICK CREAMY VEGETABLE SOUP

1/3 cup Casserole Sauce Mix
1 ¼ cups water
1 can (4 oz.) mushrooms
1 can (15 oz.) mixed vegetables, drained and rinsed
OR use 2 cups of your favorite frozen vegetable

In a large saucepan, combine sauce mix and water. Bring to a boil, then add remaining ingredients.

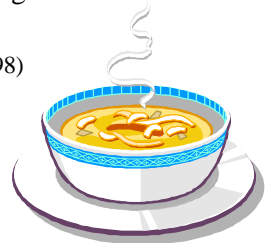
(Adapted from ideas offered by Iowa State University Extension Nutrition Field Specialists)

SIMPLE TACO SOUP (6-8 servings)

1 pound group beef
1 envelope taco seasoning mix
1-1/2 cups water
1 can (15 oz.) mild chili beans
1 can (15 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 oz.) pinto beans, rinsed and drained
1 can (15 oz.) stewed tomatoes
1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes with green chilies
1 can (4 oz.) chopped green chilies, optional
1 envelope ranch salad dressing mix

In a Dutch oven or large kettle, brown beef, rinse and drain. Add taco seasoning and mix well. Stir in remaining ingredients. Simmer uncovered, for 15 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally.

(Adapted from Quick Cooking, May/June 1998)



SOUP TIPS

- Make a double batch of soup. Serve for dinner and then freeze leftovers for lunch and other meals.
- Healthy Goal: Try to find canned soups that have less than 400 mg of sodium and less than 3 g of fat per serving.
- If freezer space is limited making canned vegetables a better choice, you may reduce the sodium content by draining and rinsing them before adding to the soup.
- Use pureed cooked beans to thicken your soups – this will add a smooth texture and lots of fiber.
- Speed tips: 1) Buy garlic already minced. You can find this in the produce or spice section of the grocery store. 2) When you buy fresh green onions, thinly chop whatever you don't need immediately and put in a resealable bag the freezer. They add great color and flavor to dishes.

(Ideas adapted from Communicating Food for Health, January, 2000)

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