

# Soups of all sorts

By **Sandra Bastin, PhD, RDN, LD**

*Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist*

There's nothing quite as good on a cold winter day as a hot bowl of soup or a cool refreshing soup on a hot summer day. Soup and sandwich, soup and salad, Saturday lunch, Sunday supper, appetizer or main dish... soup can fill the bill. Whether you use garden-fresh, frozen or canned ingredients, soups offer economy and nutrition. Theoretically, a soup can be any combination of vegetables, meat or fish cooked in a liquid. It may be thick, like gumbo; thin, such as consommé; smooth, like a bisque; or chunky like chowder or bouillabaisse. Though most soups are hot, some like vichyssoise and many fruit-based soups are served chilled. Soups are often garnished with flavor enhancers such as croutons, grated cheese or sour cream.



- **A bisque** is a thick, rich soup usually consisting of pureed seafood and cream. **Stock, broth, bouillon and consommé** are interchangeable. Bouillon is a broth made by cooking vegetables, poultry, meat or fish in water. The liquid that is strained off after cooking is the bouillon, which can form the base for soups and sauces. A concentrated cube of dehydrated beef, chicken or vegetable stock is referred to as bouillon cubes. The granular form is also available. Consommé is usually a clarified meat or fish broth. A stock is clarified by removing the sediment.
- **Bouillabaisse** is a celebrated seafood stew from Provence, made with an assortment of fish and shellfish, onions, tomatoes, white wine, olive oil, garlic, saffron and herbs. The stew is ladled over thick slices of French bread.
- **Gumbo** is a hearty soup-stew made of a variety of meat and seafood, such as chicken, sausage, ham, shrimp and crab, and vegetables like okra, tomatoes and onions. The dish blends the culinary cultures of the French, Spanish, African and Indian.
- **Chowder** is a rich milk or cream-based soup, featuring solid ingredients like vegetables and/or seafood which have been gently simmered to tenderness. New England-style chowder is made with milk or cream and Manhattan-style with tomatoes. The term chowder is also used to describe any thick, rich soup containing chunks of food, such as corn chowder.
- **A stew** is any dish that is prepared by stewing and often applies to dishes that contain meat, vegetables and a thick soup-like broth resulting from a combination of the stewing liquid and the natural juices of the food being stewed.
- **Vichyssoise** is a rich, creamy potato-and-leek soup that's served cold and garnished with chopped chives.

## The classic cream soup

Cream-based soups contain milk or cream and are thickened with a mixture of flour and butter or egg yolk. Cream soups must be cooked over low heat, along with frequent stirring to prevent scorching. They freeze and store well, although a brisk stirring is often required after thawing and reheating to regain their creamy texture. Chilled fruit and vegetable soups usually have a cream base.

## Start with a stock

Homemade beef, chicken or vegetable stocks are the base for most soups because of their rich, fullbodied flavor and versatility. Fresh ingredients of vegetables, meat, poultry, herbs and seasonings are favored, but leftovers can be excellent additions if they have not been stored past their prime. Stocks require slow simmering for a long period of time. But once prepared, stocks freeze well after straining and thorough chilling. If you don't have time to make your own, there are low-sodium canned broths available. Allow about one cup of stock per person.

To cool large containers of soup, cool rapidly in an ice water bath, stirring frequently; or place in small containers no larger than quart-size and refrigerate or freeze immediately. Soups will keep in the refrigerator several days. Cooled broth or stock can be frozen in freezer trays. The cubes can then be stored in airtight containers in the freezer and used to add flavor to soups, gravies or sauces. Ten cubes equals about 1 cup of stock.

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## Vegetable Stock

- 2 large carrots, coarsely chopped
- 1 large yellow onion, coarsely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
- 1 medium-size turnip, coarsely chopped
- 1 large tomato, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 cup shredded lettuce
- 6 sprigs parsley

- 1 clove garlic
- 1 bay leaf
- 3/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 6 cups of water

1. Combine all ingredients in a large stockpot.
2. Bring to a boil.
3. Simmer the stock, partially covered, 4-6 hours.
4. Strain the stock and allow it to cool.
5. Label and freeze in airtight containers for up to 6 months.

**Yield:** 3-4 cups

**Nutritional analysis:** 73 Calories, 17 g carbohydrate, 1 g fat, 80 mg sodium

**Use the vegetable stock in the following recipes or be creative with items you have on hand.**

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## Chunky Vegetable and Pasta Soup

Peel and dice 1 medium tomato and 1 zucchini; chop 2 tablespoons green pepper; and slice 2 mushrooms. Add 1/4 cup small shell pasta to 4 cups of boiling vegetable stock and simmer until pasta is partially cooked, about 4 minutes. Add vegetables and continue to simmer until the vegetables are crisp-tender.

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## Oriental Style Soup

Slice 4 green onions; finely chop 1 small clove garlic; and peel and finely chop 1/2-inch piece of ginger root. Add the onions, garlic and ginger, and 1 teaspoon soy sauce and 1 teaspoon hot pepper flakes to 4 cups of boiling vegetable stock. Add 1/2 cup cooked chopped shrimp or one 6 1/2-ounce can of chopped, drained clams. Simmer 2 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of cooked, wide egg noodles for a heartier soup.

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