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Photo by Stephen Blancett

SUPER SOUPS

New Twists on Old Favorites
Heal, Nourish and Soothe

by Judith Fertig

Winter season soups on chilly days can warm us, both body and soul. Whatever our food preferences or time constraints, some new twists on traditional favorites will satisfy everyone's taste buds—with an accent on healthy pleasure. Here's where to start.

Reinventing the past. From her Colorado mountain home, Jenny McGruther, author of *The Nourished Kitchen*, celebrates the wisdom of traditional foodways, making nutrient-dense, healing soup broth from bones, water, vegetables and seasonings. McGruther's twist is to make it in a six-quart slow cooker.

Once her family has dined on organic roast or rotisserie chicken, she simmers the bones with purified water, a bay leaf or two, a few whole peppercorns and a few chopped organic vegetables like onion, carrot and celery

on the low setting for 24 hours. Then she ladles the broth through a coffee strainer into another container, refreshes the slow cooker with more water and simmers the bones and seasonings for another 24 hours. Eventually, the broth will have less flavor and color, and that's when McGruther starts all over again.

"I call this perpetual soup," she says. She blogs at NourishedKitchen.com.

Slowing it down. With homemade broth on hand, it's easy to make the Italian winter staple of Tuscan Vegetable Bean Soup. Cookbook authors and slow cooker experts Kathy Moore and Roxanne Wyss, from Lee's Summit, Missouri, love to make this when they're working on a cookbook deadline. They simply use what they have in the refrigerator, freezer or pantry.

"With a soup like this you can always substitute one vegetable for

Natural Awakenings recommends using organic and non-GMO (genetically modified) ingredients whenever possible.

another, adjusting the recipe to what you enjoy and have on hand," advises Moore. The pair blogs at *PluggedIntoCooking.com*.

Speeding it up. Sometimes, we need a single serving of homemade soup fast. Award-winning recipe developer and cookbook author Camilla Saulsbury, of Nacogdoches, Texas, whips up a Pumpkin Sage Soup that can simmer in a saucepan within minutes, ready to be enjoyed in a mug.

Saulsbury uses organic canned pumpkin, full of vitamins, which can vary in sweetness. "If needed," she suggests, "add a drizzle of maple syrup to enhance the flavor of the soup."

Making "bisque" in a high-speed blender. Karen Adler is an avid grower of organic tomatoes in her Kansas City garden. When the seasonal harvest comes to an end, Adler grills or oven roasts the tomatoes, along with organic peppers and onions, and then freezes them, ready to make Roasted Tomato Bisque any time of the year.

"My secret to a light bisque without using cream is to blend all the roasted vegetables together with a high-speed blender to give it body. A swirl of extra-virgin olive oil at the end finishes ensuring the satisfying flavor," she says.

Going cold. Douglas McNish, head chef at Toronto's raw and vegan restaurant Raw Aura, serves a popular Lemon, Cucumber and Dill Soup, which is easy to make in a food processor. "This soup is amazing this time of year, when most of our diets may be lacking in healthy fats and trace minerals," says McNish.

Warming up. Two cookbook authors teamed up across many miles to write *300 Sensational Soups*. Meredith Deeds lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, while Carla Snyder resides in Cleveland, Ohio. They've mutually discovered the naturally warming properties of curry powder in Curried Coconut Chickpea Soup.

Snyder observes, "A good soup nourishes the heart, as well as the stomach, spreading a feeling of satisfaction and contentment."

Judith Fertig blogs at AlfrescoFoodAndLifestyle.blogspot.com from Overland Park, KS.

SOUP'S ON!

Tasty Recipes for Winter Meals



Tuscan Vegetable Bean Soup

Yields: 6 servings

*2 Tbsp olive oil
1 large yellow onion, chopped
3 carrots, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 cup frozen, cut green beans
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 can (14.5 oz, BPA-free) diced tomatoes, with liquid
4 cups bone broth or 1 carton (32 oz) vegetable broth
2 tsp Italian seasoning
1/8 tsp crushed red pepper flakes, optional
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 cup chopped fresh broccoli
1 can (15 oz, BPA-free) cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
2 Tbsp minced fresh basil, plus additional for garnish
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese*

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven over medium high heat. Add onions, carrot and celery and cook, stirring frequently, for 3 minutes. Stir in the green beans and cook, stirring frequently, for 2 to 3 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Stir in garlic and cook for 30 seconds. Stir in tomatoes, vegetable broth, Italian seasoning, red pepper flakes, salt and pepper. Heat, covered, until boiling, and then reduce heat to a simmer and cook 15 to 20 minutes.

Stir in broccoli, cannellini beans and minced basil. Simmer for 5 minutes or until the vegetables are as tender as desired. Ladle into bowls. Sprinkle

with grated Parmesan cheese. Garnish if desired with additional minced basil.

Adapted from PluggedIntoCooking.com, by Kathy Moore and Roxanne Wyss

Pumpkin Sage Soup

Yields: 1 serving

*3/4 cup ready-to-use chicken or vegetable broth
2/3 cup pumpkin purée (not pie filling)
1/4 tsp dried rubbed sage
3 Tbsp half-and-half, whole milk or coconut creamer
Salt and freshly ground black pepper*

In a saucepan, bring the broth, pumpkin and sage to a simmer over medium-high heat. In the mug, stir broth, pumpkin and sage until blended. Stir in cream and heat for 1 minute more. Season it to taste with salt and pepper before pouring into a mug. Garnish with roasted pumpkin seeds.

Adapted from 250 Best Meals in a Mug, by Camilla V. Saulsbury





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Roasted Tomato Bisque

Yields: 8 servings

4 large beefsteak tomatoes, sliced
 2 red bell peppers, seeded and sliced
 1 large red onion, peeled and sliced
 2 Tbsp plus ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
 ¼ cup red wine vinegar
 2 Tbsp Worcestershire sauce
 1 tsp kosher salt
 1 tsp hot pepper sauce
 Bone broth or vegetable broth,
 if necessary
 Add fine dry or gluten-free bread
 crumbs and sliced green onion
 for garnish

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper. Arrange the tomatoes, bell peppers and onion on the baking sheets and drizzle with the two tablespoons of olive oil. Roast for 30 minutes or until soft and browned at the edges.

Transfer to a Vitamix or similar blender. Add the remaining half-cup olive oil, red wine vinegar, salt and hot pepper sauce and blend until smooth. Add a little bone broth or vegetable broth if the soup is too thick. Serve each bowl with a sprinkling of breadcrumbs and thinly sliced green onion.

Adapted from The Gardener and the Grill, by Karen Adler and Judith Fertig



Photo by Stephen Blancett

Lemon, Cucumber and Dill Soup

Yields: 2 servings

2 cups chopped peeled,
 seeded cucumber
 ½ cup chopped romaine lettuce
 ¼ cup filtered water
 ¼ cup chopped fresh dill fronds
 1 clove garlic
 3 Tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
 ½ tsp fine sea salt

In a food processor fitted with its metal blade, process cucumber, lettuce, water, dill, garlic, lemon juice, olive oil and salt until smooth. Transfer to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate until chilled, at least 1 hour or up to 3 hours. Serve garnished with a dollop of vegan sour cream, if preferred, and additional dill.

Adapted from Eat Raw, Eat Well, by Douglas McNish

Coconut Curried Chickpea Soup

Yields: 6 servings

2 Tbsp olive oil
 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 Tbsp curry powder
 1 lb small, red-skinned potatoes,
 ½-inch diced
 4 cups vegetable stock
 1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
 ½ tsp salt
 2 cans (each 14 to 19 oz, BPA-free)
 chickpeas, drained and rinsed
 1 zucchini, ½-inch diced
 1 Tbsp packed light brown or
 date sugar



1 Tbsp freshly squeezed lime juice
2 cups (about 3 oz) packed
baby spinach
Sea salt and freshly ground
black pepper
Toasted shredded coconut
for garnish

In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until softened, about 6 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for 1 minute. Add curry powder and sauté another 10 seconds. Add potatoes and stir to coat.

Add stock and coconut milk; cook for 10 minutes. Add chickpeas and zucchini; cook another 10 minutes, or until potatoes and zucchini are tender. Stir in brown sugar and lime juice. Add spinach and stir until wilted. Season the soup with salt and pepper to taste. Ladle into heated bowls and garnish with coconut.

*Adapted from 300 Sensational Soups,
by Carla Snyder and Meredith Deeds*

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