

Extension

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You Can Count On Soup!!!

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Trying to get enough vegetables into your daily diet? One of the easiest and most economic means to do that is to make soup. It is such a great comfort food especially on a cold day.

Canned soups are good in a pinch, but are high in sodium. Making your own soups can reduce sodium and increase vegetable consumption. Homemade soup helps you save money which makes it easier on your wallet.



Vegetables provide necessary vitamins and minerals to help keep our bodies healthy and energized. Vegetables also provide fiber, vitamins and minerals.

Vegetable soup bases are easy to make. Unlike what happens during stewing and frying; the vegetables, meat and poultry are cooked directly in the soup broth, conserving much more of their natural nutrients, vitamins and general essence. Soups usually contain a lot less calories than other main dishes, but aren't any less nutritious or filling.

Leftover vegetables, rice, meats, poultry, fish and beans make great soups! Fresh, canned or frozen vegetables can also be used. Dried beans are very inexpensive, low in fat adding lean protein to soups. To make your own broth, boil meat or poultry bones in water. A vegetable broth can be made from vegetable juice or tomato sauce and water.

To simplify soup making at your home, keep these ingredients on hand:

- Pasta in a variety of shapes such as stars, alphabets, bow ties or tiny tubes
- Canned tomatoes and tomato sauce
- Cooked meat or poultry which could be leftovers from another meal
- Broth or bouillon, either homemade or commercially prepared. Low-sodium varieties are best, so that soup can then be seasoned to taste
- Quick cooking pearl barley or rice
- Vegetables either fresh, frozen or leftover such as carrots, celery, peas, potatoes, onions, and corn
- Beans, either inexpensive dried beans that required pre-cooking or canned beans that can be drained and used right away
- Herbs, either fresh or dried, just keep in mind to use less of a dried herb
- Lentils, they don't need to be pre-cooked
- Canned vegetable juice to add nutrients and body

Then to complete the meal, just make a salad and add some crackers or bread.

Let's Talk

Invite children to help make the soup. Let them choose which pasta or vegetables to put into the soup. This activity could spur an interest in cooking for children. If pressed for time, add ingredients to a commercially prepared soup base or broth. For example, add fresh cut tomatoes and a little basil to a can of classic tomato soup.

Serve and Store Soups Safely

Make a large batch of soup and enjoy some for another meal. Many soups, with the possible exception of seafood soups, may taste even better the next day! For best safety and quality, plan to eat refrigerated soup within 2 to 3 days or freeze it. Avoid letting soup set at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Don't put a large pot of hot soup directly into your refrigerator. It would take an 8-inch stock pot of steaming soup 24 hours to cool down to a safe temperature in the refrigerator. To Be Safe:

- Speed cooling by transferring soup to shallow containers, making sure soup is no more than 2 inches deep. Refrigerate promptly. You can place loosely covered foods in your refrigerator while still warm, then cover when food is completely cooled.
- When serving soup a second time, reheat it until it's steaming hot throughout, at least 165 degrees F.

Cold Weather Activities:

Winter months can be a challenge for daily physical activity, but the need doesn't go away when the weather is cold. When weather permits, walking or playing in the snow can be a work out. Engage with your kids in old-time favorite activities like creating a snow angel, dancing the "Hokey Pokey" or playing the game "Duck, Duck Goose". Challenge children to come up with fun, healthy activities to do inside and outside.

Recipe for Health: Healthy Vegetable Beef Soup

Ingredients:

- 3 c. cooked beef roast, cut into bite size pieces or cooked ground turkey
- 1 c. beef broth from cooked roast or low-sodium canned/boxed broth
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 4 potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 2-3 c. water
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 can (15 oz.) diced tomatoes, with liquid
- 1 can (15 oz.) green beans with liquid
- 1 can (15 oz.) whole-kernel corn with liquid

Directions:

1. Remember to start by washing your hands.
2. Place cooked beef/turkey, broth, onion, carrots, celery and potatoes in a large pot. Add enough water to cover vegetables. Add pepper and other seasonings, if desired. Place pot on burner set to Med-High heat. Stir soup mixture, as needed to keep ingredients from sticking to pot.
3. When soup begins to boil, turn the heat to Low. Cover pot and simmer about 1 hour or until vegetables are tender.



4. Add tomatoes, green beans and corn. Turn heat to Med-High. When soup begins to boil, turn heat to Low, over pot and simmer about 15 minutes.

Cooking Tips:

For flavor variations, try adding herbs. Favorites include marjoram, thyme, oregano, rosemary or a bay leaf. (Remember to remove the bay leaf before serving).

Recipe adapted from: Kids a Cookin', K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program