

## Soup

Food historians tell us the history of soup is probably as old as the history of cooking. The act of combining various ingredients in a large pot to create a nutritious, filling, easily digested, simple to make/serve food was inevitable. This made it the perfect choice for both sedentary and travelling cultures, rich and poor, healthy people and invalids. Soup (and stews, pottages, porridges, gruels, etc.) evolved according to local ingredients and tastes. New England chowder, Spanish gazpacho, Russian borscht, Italian minestrone, French onion, Chinese won ton and Campbell's tomato...are all variations on the same theme.

Soups were easily digested and were prescribed for invalids since ancient times. The modern restaurant industry is said to be based on soup. Restoratifs (wheron the word "restaurant" comes) were the first items served in public restaurants in 18th century Paris. Broth [Pot-au-feu], bouillion, and consomme entered here. Classic French cuisine generated many of the soups we know today.

Advancements in science enabled soups to take many forms...portable, canned, dehydrated, microwave-ready. "Pocket soup" was carried by colonial travellers, as it could easily be reconstituted with a little hot water. Canned and dehydrated soups were available in the 19th century. These supplied the military, covered wagon trains, cowboy chuck wagons, and the home pantry. Advances in science also permitted the adjustment of nutrients to fit specific dietary needs (low salt, high fiber, etc.).

### Why do we "eat" rather than "drink" soup?

Etiquette experts tell us we "eat," rather than "drink" soup because it is considered part of the meal. Additionally, in most cultures soup is consumed with a spoon rather than sipped from the container. Consistency (clear broth, chunky chicken vegetable, creamy cold cucumber), preparation (puree, reduction, simmer, dried), and ingredients (meat, vegetable, starch, dairy, fruit) do no factor into this particular equation.

### Broth

**A term which usually means the liquid in which meat has been cooked or a simple soup based thereon.** It is a close equivalent to the French bouillon and the Italian brodo, but difference between the evolution of cookery in English-speaking countries and those of the cuisines which use other languages have give it...a flavour of its own. The word comes from a root which means simply to brew, without specifying the presence of meat, and there are early examples of broths made with just vegetables...However, for several centuries, broth has usually implied meat. It has also been prominent in invalid cookery...It could be said that broth occupies an intermediate position between stock and soup. A broth (e.g. chicken broth) can be eaten as is, whereas a stock (e.g. chicken stock) would normally be consumed only as an ingredient in something mroe complex. **A soup, on the other hand, would usually be less simple, more finished.**

### Consomme

"Consomme, meaning a clear soup, has been used in English since the early part of the 19th century, but has been a French culinary term since the 16th century. It is the past

participle of the verb consommer, meaning to consume or accomplish or finish, and indicating in this context a finished soup as opposed to a simple stock or broth. Double consomme is a clarified consomme. Little fragments of this or that may be introduced into a consomme at some stage in its production, or just when serving, and the nature of these is, in classical French cookery, reflected in the name give to the consomme...A consomme may be served hot or cold, usually at the beginning of the meal. The simplest consomme of all, in France, is the broth (bouillon) from Pot-au-feu."

---*Oxford Companion to Food*, Alan Davidson [Oxford University Press:Oxford] 1999 (p. 212)

[NOTE: this book has separate entries for soup, broth [bouillon], pot-au-feu and stock. Your librarian can help you find these pages.]

"Consumme. In French, consomme is literally something that has been consummated—that is, by boiling down, the flavours of meat, vegetables, or whatever have become completely concentrated...Originally, the word seems to have been applied to any rich broth which was the product of long, slow cooking; but by the mid-nineteenth century the current signification 'clear soup' was well established.

### **Chicken Soup**

1 onion  
3 carrots  
3 celery  
2T. butter or olive oil or chicken fat  
8 oz chicken  
1 ½ chicken stock  
cl. garlic  
2t. parsley  
s&p

Saute onions carrots and celery with fat, add garlic after a couple of minutes.

### **Potato Soup**

1/2 lb <b>Butter</b>	3 c <b>Milk</b>
1 1/2 Ribs <b>celery</b> ; diced fine	<b>Salt</b> ; (to taste)
1 md <b>Carrot</b> ; diced fine	<b>Pepper</b> ; (to taste)
1/2 md <b>Onion</b> ; diced fine	1/2 lb <b>Bacon</b> ; cooked and diced
1 1/2 c <b>Flour</b>	1 lb <b>Potatoes</b> ; cooked and diced
3 c <b>Water</b>	

In a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven, melt butter, saute celery, carrots, and onion until tender. With a wire whisk, slowly add flour to make a roux (it will be very thick). Cook and stir until roux bubbles, but do not brown. While stirring with a wire whisk, add water to make a smooth sauce, and then add milk, salt, pepper, bacon and potatoes. Makes 8 cups.

### **Tomato Soup**

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup chopped carrot
- 1/4 cup chopped celery
- 2 (28 ounce) cans crushed tomatoes
- 3 1/2 cups vegetable broth
- 1 tablespoon vegetarian Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 4 drops hot pepper sauce

1. Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Saute onion and garlic until onion is tender.
2. Add carrot and celery; cook 7 to 9 minutes until tender, stirring frequently. Stir in tomatoes, broth, Worcestershire sauce, salt, thyme, pepper and hot pepper sauce. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer 20 minutes, stirring frequently.

## **Broth**

A flavored liquid made from the juices remaining after cooking meat, fish, seafood, vegetables, or similar ingredients in water. Unlike a food stock that is made from meat, vegetables, bones containing gelatin, herbs, and wine, a Broth only uses meats, meat bones or vegetables. Meat Broths typically started with bones that add gelatin to the finished broth, while the meat and fat add substance, aroma, and flavor. To produce a Broth the liquid that remains after the ingredients have cooked is defatted, strained to remove bones and particles, and often enhanced with herbs and spices to improve the flavor. Vegetable Broths, which contain little or no fat, can at times be substituted for meat Broths. However, the stock may lack flavor and aroma provided by the fats in the meat. If a vegetable stock is desired, it may be best to roast the vegetables with the skins on in order allow the sugars in the vegetables to be released into the Broth, enhancing the flavor, the aroma and the

## **Making a Vegetable Broth**

The simplest way to make a flavorful broth is to use vegetable scraps.

Some people use a large zip lock bag or a plastic container with a lid to store the scraps in the refrigerator, until they are ready to be used.

"Scraps" are potato peels, carrot tops and shavings, onion peels, broccoli stems, celery tops and strings, bell pepper tops, tough asparagus ends, green bean ends, the central core of a cabbage. These are all things most of us just throw away.

This is a little bit "trial and error," but it can make a wonderful difference in our reflective food preparation. Using about twice as much water as vegetables, we add a bit of salt, and bring them to a boil. Then we turn the heat down to let the vegetable pieces simmer.

After the vegetables have become very soft - about an hour - scoop out the vegetables and carefully pour the broth through a strainer. When cooled, the broth can be saved, even frozen in various sized cartons.

## **Consommé-**

Well made stock is reasonably clear, though it does contain some suspended matter. When it is clarified for consommé, two ingredients play major roles. Egg whites, which are almost pure albumen, are dissolved in the stock, as albumen is a water soluble protein. When the stock is heated, the albumen begins to precipitate out. You can see the strands forming as it happens, and these sticky strands reach out and trap suspended particles, both small and large. The heat causes them to rise and they form a cap, with all the solid particles that rises to the top. If the liquid is drawn off without disturbing this cap, it will be seen to be water clear. I use one large egg white per quart, plus one extra per gallon (not really needed, just insurance).

## **A Simple Breadsoup**

- Hard stale bread
- 50 g butter
- Soup stock cubes
- Freshly grated mature Gruyère cheese

Cut the bread into cubes, about 1 inch wide. It does not matter that much if the pieces get smaller.

Put a soup pot on high heat and melt the butter.

Pour the bread in the pot and stir it, trying to cover every piece with some butter. Continue stirring, dry roasting the bread. This is a bit a smoky matter, therefore make sure that the exhaust fan is working.

When every piece of bread has some charred spots (that will be the case after about 10 minutes), pull the pot off the heat and add water until the bread pieces are well covered. Put the pot back on heat and bring it to boil.

Crumble soup stock cubes for the amount of liquid into the soup. It does not really matter what kind of soup base you are using. Beef makes it a bit stronger, but vegetable or chicken works equally well.

Reduce the heat and let it simmer for about 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. The bread pieces will soak up the liquid, and it might be necessary to add a bit more water.

Taste, season if needed (mainly pepper, as the soup stock has brought in enough salt), serve into bowls and sprinkle a little freshly grated mature Gruyère on it. Enjoy.