

**After all the excitement of the holidays, and all the rich foods, it is time for soup season!
This week, we warm up at home with some homemade soups!**

Bacon Cheeseburger Soup

*Prep Time: 20 min.
Cook Time: 4 hrs.
Servings: 6*

1-1/2 lbs. lean ground beef
1 lg. onion, chopped
1/3 C. all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. pepper
2-1/2 C. chicken broth
1 can (12 oz) evaporated milk
1-1/2 C. shredded cheddar cheese
8 slices American cheese, chopped
1-1/2 C. shredded lettuce
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
6 bacon strips, cooked and crumbled

In a large skillet, cook beef with onion over medium-high heat until no longer pink, 6-8 min., breaking beef into crumbles; drain. Stir in flour and pepper; transfer to a 5-qt. slow cooker.

Stir in broth and milk. Cook, covered, on low for 4-5 hours or until flavors are blended. Stir in cheeses until melted. Top servings with remaining ingredients.

Chicken Cordon Bleu Soup

*Prep Time: 10 min.
Cook Time: 20 min.
Total Time: 30 min.
Servings: 4*

1/4 C. butter
1/2 onion, diced
1/4 C. all-purpose flour
2 C. whole milk
1 C. heavy cream
1 C. chicken broth
2 chicken breasts, cooked and cut into bite-sized pieces
4 oz. ham, cubed
4 tsp. stone ground mustard
1/4 C. chopped parsley
6 oz. Swiss cheese, shredded
Salt and pepper, to taste
croutons, for serving (optional)

Melt butter in a medium-sized soup pan. Add onion and cook over medium-low heat until tender, about 10 minutes. You can cover the pot to make the onion cook faster.

Sprinkle in flour and whisk until smooth. Cook for 2 min.

Pour in half each of the milk, cream, and chicken broth and whisk until smooth. Gradually add the rest. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Boil and stir 1 min.

Remove from heat and add chicken, ham, mustard, parsley, and Swiss cheese. Stir until cheese is completely melted. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed.

Serve immediately with croutons, toast, or biscuits.

Easy Pot Sticker Soup

*Prep Time: 15 min.
Cook Time: 5-1/4 hrs.
Servings: 6*

1/2 lb. Chinese or napa cabbage, thinly sliced
2 celery ribs, thinly sliced
2 med. carrots, cut into matchsticks
1/3 C. thinly sliced green onions
2 to 3 T. soy sauce
2 T. rice vinegar
3 garlic cloves, minced
2 tsp. minced fresh gingerroot or 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. sesame oil
6 C. reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 pkg. (16 oz.) frozen chicken pot stickers
Crispy chow mein noodles, optional

In a 4-qt. slow cooker, combine the first 9 ingredients. Stir in broth. Cook, covered, on low until vegetables are tender, 5-6 hours. Add pot stickers; cook, covered, on high until heated through, 15-20 min. If desired, sprinkle with chow mein noodles before serving.

Hearty Baked Potato Soup

Prep Time: 25 min.

Cook Time: 6 hrs.

Servings: 10

5 lbs. baking potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 13 C.)

1 lg. onion, chopped

1/4 C. butter

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

3 cans (14-1/2 oz. each) chicken broth

1 C. shredded sharp cheddar cheese

1 C. half-and-half cream

3 T. minced fresh chives

Optional toppings: Shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream, crumbled cooked bacon and minced chives

Place first 7 ingredients in a 6-qt. slow cooker. Cook, covered, on low until potatoes are very tender, 6-8 hours.

Mash potatoes slightly to break up and thicken soup. Add 1 cup cheese and the cream and chives; heat through, stirring until blended. Serve with toppings as desired.

Hearty Sausage Soup

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 6 hrs.

Servings: 14

2 lbs. smoked kielbasa or Polish sausage, sliced

4 C. coarsely chopped cabbage

2 cans (15-1/2 oz. each) great northern beans, rinsed and drained

6 med. carrots, thinly sliced

3 med. potatoes, cubed

2 celery ribs, thinly sliced

1 sm. onion, chopped

2 C. water

1 can (14-1/2 oz.) Italian diced tomatoes, undrained

1 can (14-1/2 oz.) chicken broth

1 tsp. dried basil

1/2 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. dried savory

1/4 tsp. garlic powder

1/4 tsp. pepper

In a large skillet, brown kielbasa in batches. Transfer to a 6-qt. slow cooker. Stir in remaining ingredients. Cook, covered, on low 6-8 hours or until vegetables are tender. Skim fat.

The Best Minestrone Soup

Prep Time: 30 min.

Cook Time: 20 min.

Total Time: 50 min.

Servings: 8

3 T. olive oil

1 med. onion, chopped

8 cloves garlic, chopped

8 C. vegetable broth

14 oz. diced tomatoes, from a can, with juices

1/2 C. light red wine, such as Chianti

2 T. tomato paste

1 lg. celery stalk, thinly sliced

2 med. carrots, peeled and julienned

1 C. green beans, cut

15 oz. kidney beans, from a can, rinsed and drained

15 oz. white beans, from a can, rinsed and drained

1 med. zucchini, sliced

2 tsp. dried oregano
2 tsp. dried basil
2 T. fresh parsley, chopped
1/2 C. elbow pasta, or shell pasta, dry
kosher salt to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
Optional: grated Parmesan to serve

In a large heavy pot or Dutch oven, heat the olive oil over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the onion and garlic. Cook until translucent, stirring frequently. Add the broth, tomatoes with juices, wine, tomato paste, celery, and carrots. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the ingredients to a boil for 15 minutes. Add the green beans, kidney beans, white beans, zucchini, herbs, and pasta. Bring the mixture back to a boil, cooking for 10 min. or until the pasta reaches the desired tenderness.

Season with additional kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Garnish with freshly grated Parmesan, if desired. Serve with bread.

Broccoli-Cheese Soup

Prep Time: 10 min.

Total Time: 40 min.

Servings: 10

1 whole onion, diced
1 stick butter
1/3 C. flour
4 C. whole milk
2 C. half-and-half
4 heads broccoli cut into florets
1 pinch nutmeg
3 C. grated cheese (mild cheddar, sharp cheddar, jack, etc.)
Small dash of salt
Ground black pepper
2 C. chicken broth, if needed for thinning

Melt butter in a pot over medium heat, then add the onions. Cook the onions for 3 to 4 min., then sprinkle the flour over the top. Stir to combine and cook for 1 min. or so, then pour in milk and half-and-half. Add nutmeg, then add broccoli, a small dash of salt, and plenty of black pepper.

Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer for 20 to 30 min., or until the broccoli is tender. Stir in cheese and allow to melt.

Taste seasonings and adjust if needed. Then either serve as is, or mash it with a potato masher to break up the broccoli a bit, or transfer to a blender in two batches and puree completely.

Creamy Wild Rice Soup

1/3 C. uncooked wild rice
1 T. canola oil
1 qt. water
1 med. onion, chopped
1 celery rib, finely chopped
1 med. carrot, finely chopped
1/2 C. butter
1/2 C. all-purpose flour
3 C. chicken broth
2 C. half-and-half cream
1/2 tsp. dried rosemary, crushed
1 tsp. salt

In a medium saucepan, combine the rice, oil and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 30 min.

Meanwhile, in a Dutch oven, cook the onion, celery and carrot in butter until vegetables are almost tender. Stir in flour until blended; cook and stir for 2 min. Slowly stir in broth and undrained rice. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until slightly thickened, 2 min. Reduce heat; stir in the cream, rosemary and salt. Simmer, uncovered, until rice is tender, about 20 min.

Italian Chicken Soup

Prep Time: 20 min.

Cook Time: 1 hr. 30 min.

Total Time: 1 hr. 50 min.

Serving: 8

1 box ditalini pasta (very short macaroni-type pasta noodles)
1 T. olive oil
1 whole cut up fryer chicken
8 C. low sodium chicken broth
1 whole medium onion, diced
2 whole green bell peppers, diced
2 stalks celery, diced
2 whole fresh jalapenos, diced

1 T. olive oil
1 can (28 oz.) can whole tomatoes
2 C. heavy cream
1/3 C. extra virgin olive oil
4 T. Minced fresh oregano
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
Parmesan cheese shavings, for serving

Cook pasta in a pot according to package directions, being sure not to overcook it. Drain and rinse in cold water to cool. Toss in 1 T. olive oil and set aside.

Place chicken in a large pot or Dutch oven and cover in chicken stock. Bring to a boil, then simmer chicken, covered, for 30 min. Turn off heat and leave covered for 30 min. Remove chicken from pot and shred meat. Discard bones and set meat aside.

Dice canned tomatoes and return them to their juice. Set aside.

Heat a small skillet over medium high heat. Add olive oil and oregano and turn off heat, stirring over the next minute to keep oregano from burning. Set this aside.

Either pour off chicken broth into a separate container or use a new pot to sauté onion, green pepper, celery, and jalapenos in 1 T. olive oil over medium heat until tender and golden brown, about 10 minutes. Add chicken broth, shredded chicken, and tomatoes with their juice. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Add cooked pasta, cream, and all the oregano and olive oil from the small skillet. Stir to combine. Turn off heat.

Serve with lots of Parmesan sprinkled on the top--the more the better! Crusty Italian bread is good, too.

Quote of the Week:

“Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. He is rich who owns the day, and no one owns the day who allows it to be invaded with fret and anxiety.”

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson