

Soup season is upon us. We have a few soup, chili and stew recipes to help keep the chill at bay. If you have a favorite recipe, send it in! Recipes, with photo (and a short story/history), if available, can be submitted to ads@thedrummer.com.

French Onion Soup

Level: Easy
Total: 1 hr 10 min
Prep: 15 min
Cook: 55 min
Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1/2 c. unsalted butter
4 onions, sliced
2 garlic cloves, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 fresh thyme sprigs
Kosher salt & freshly ground black pepper
1 c. red wine
3 heaping T. all-purpose flour
2 quarts beef broth
1 baguette, sliced
1/2 pound grated Gruyere

Melt the stick of butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onions, garlic, bay leaves, thyme, and salt and pepper and cook until the onions are very soft and caramelized, about 25 minutes. Add the wine, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the wine has evaporated and the onions are dry, about 5 minutes. Discard the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Dust the onions with the flour and give them a stir. Turn the heat down to medium low so the flour doesn't burn, and cook for 10 minutes to cook out the raw flour taste. Now add the beef broth, bring the soup back to a simmer, and cook for 10 minutes. Season, to taste, with salt and pepper.

When you're ready to eat, preheat the broiler. Arrange the baguette slices on a baking sheet in a single layer. Sprinkle the slices with the Gruyere and broil until bubbly and golden brown, 3 to 5 minutes.

Ladle the soup in bowls and float several of the Gruyere croutons on top.

Alternative method: Ladle the soup into bowls, top each with 2 slices of bread and top with cheese. Put the bowls into the oven to toast the bread and melt the cheese.

Beef Stroganoff Soup

Yields: 4 servings
Prep Time: 10 mins
Cook Time: 35 mins
Total Time: 45 mins

5 T. butter, divided
1 lb. beef steak (sirloin is great), thinly sliced (see note)
1 small onion, finely chopped
8 oz. weight baby portobello mushrooms, thinly sliced
2 T. all-purpose flour
3 c. beef broth
2 c. heavy cream
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
Salt & pepper, to taste
6 oz. weight egg noodles
1 c. sour cream
1/4 c. finely chopped parsley

Heat a soup pot over medium heat. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in the pot and add beef. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, just until steak is browned. Remove to a plate along with the juices.

Melt remaining butter in the now-empty pot. Add onion and cook until beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms and cook until tender, about 5 more minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Sprinkle in flour and cook for 2 minutes. Whisk in beef broth and cream. Bring to a boil. Add Worcestershire sauce and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Add noodles and cook for the length of time recommended on the package, or until cooked to your preferred firmness. Remove from heat. Stir in beef (along with the juices), sour cream, and parsley. Taste once more to adjust seasoning and serve.

Notes: It's easiest to slice beef thinly when it's still somewhat frozen but not rock-hard. You can substitute ground beef for the steak if you prefer. If you do make that substitution, you can brown the meat "dry" in the pan and leave out the extra 2 tablespoons of butter.

Butternut Squash, Sausage, and Tortelloni Soup

Yields: 8 servings
Prep Time: 30 mins
Cook Time: 1 hour 15 mins

Total Time: 1 hour 45 mins

1 whole butternut squash
1 T. olive oil
2 heads garlic
1 lb. Italian sausage, hot or mild
1 pkg. (8 oz. size) cheese tortelloni
1/2 tsp. dried basil
1/4 tsp. dried oregano
1/8 tsp. dried thyme
2 c. homemade, or low-sodium chicken broth
3 c. baby spinach
1 c. Heavy Cream
Salt & pepper, to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese for serving

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Cut butternut squash in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds and stringy bits. Pour olive oil in the cavity of each squash half. Slice top off the heads of garlic. Place each one, cut side down, in one of the squash cavities.

Place squash and garlic, cut side up, in a large rimmed roasting pan. Pour about 2 cups of water in the bottom of the pan. Bake in preheated oven until squash is fork tender, about 60–70 minutes. Remove from oven, pull garlic heads out of the squash, and allow to cool for a few minutes.

Meanwhile, as squash is baking, brown and crumble sausage in a large soup pot. Remove to a plate.

Bring a medium pot of water to a boil. Cook tortelloni according to package instructions. Remove with a slotted spoon to a plate.

When squash has cooled a bit, scoop out the flesh into the now-empty soup pot. Squeeze out cloves of garlic into the pot as well. Add basil, oregano, thyme, and chicken broth. Heat until warm. Puree with a stick blender until completely smooth.

Heat until nearly boiling. Add spinach, cover, and cook for 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add cream, sausage, and tortelloni. Give it a good stir. Taste and add salt and pepper if needed.

Serve hot with freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

Sausage-and-Vegetable Stew

Level: Easy

Total: 46 min

Prep: 20 min

Cook: 26 min

Yield: 4 servings

3 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1 lg. red onion, diced
4 cloves garlic, smashed
1 T. paprika, plus more for garnish
Kosher salt
3 T. all-purpose flour
6 oz. kielbasa, cut into small chunks
3 med. carrots, peeled & cut into large chunks
2 parsnips, peeled & cut into large chunks
14 oz. small red-skinned or new potatoes (6 to 8), quartered
1 T. cider vinegar
Freshly ground pepper
1/2 c. fresh parsley, roughly chopped
3/4 c. sour cream
Crusty bread, for serving

Heat the olive oil in a Dutch oven or heavy pot over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and glistening, about 6 minutes. Add the paprika and 1 teaspoon salt; cook until the oil turns deep red, about 1 minute. Add the flour and cook until just toasted, 30 more seconds. Immediately whisk in 4 cups water. Add the kielbasa, carrots, parsnips, potatoes and 1-1/2 teaspoons salt.

Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce to a simmer; cover and cook until the vegetables are tender and the broth has thickened, about 20 minutes. Add the vinegar and season with pepper.

Combine about half of the parsley with the sour cream in a small bowl and season with salt and pepper. Ladle the stew into bowls; top with the remaining parsley, a dollop of herbed sour cream and a sprinkle of paprika. Serve with bread.

Spanish Turkey Meatball Stew

Level: Easy

Total: 35 min

Active: 30 min

Yield: 4 servings

2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1 lg. onion, chopped
5 cloves garlic, minced
Kosher salt

1 tsp. smoked paprika
1 c. sliced small carrots
2 (14 oz.) cans low-sodium diced fire-roasted tomatoes
2 c. low-sodium chicken broth
1 (15 oz.) can chickpeas, drained & rinsed
1-1/4 lbs. lean ground turkey
3/4 c. loosely packed fresh parsley (about 1 bunch), chopped, plus more for topping
Freshly ground pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion, garlic and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer half of the mixture to a large bowl. Add the paprika and carrots to the remaining onion mixture in the skillet and cook 1 minute. Add the tomatoes, chicken broth and chickpeas; bring to a rapid simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce thickens slightly, about 6 minutes.

Meanwhile, add the ground turkey, parsley, 1 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper to the bowl with the reserved onion mixture and mix with your hands. Form the turkey mixture into 20 meatballs. Place the meatballs in the skillet with the sauce and simmer, turning once, until cooked through, about 7 minutes. Serve with more pepper and parsley.

Tuscan Vegetable Soup

Level: Easy

Total: 35 min

Active: 20 min

Yield: 6 (1-1/2 c.) servings

1 (15-ounce) can low-sodium cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
1 T. olive oil
1/2 lg. onion, diced (about 1 c.)
2 carrots, diced (about 1/2 c.)
2 stalks celery, diced, (about 1/2 c.)
1 small zucchini, diced (about 1-1/2 c.)
1 clove garlic, minced
1 T. chopped fresh thyme leaves (or 1 tsp. dried)
2 tsp. chopped fresh sage leaves (or 1/2 tsp. dried)
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
32 oz. low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth
1 (14.5 oz.) can no salt added diced tomatoes
2 c. chopped baby spinach leaves
1/3 c. freshly grated Parmesan, optional

In a small bowl mash half of the beans with a masher or the back of a spoon, and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large soup pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery, zucchini, garlic, thyme, sage, 1/2 teaspoon of salt and 1/4 teaspoon of pepper, and cook stirring occasionally until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes.

Add the broth and tomatoes with the juice and bring to a boil. Add the mashed and whole beans and the spinach leaves and cook until the spinach is wilted, about 3 minutes more.

Serve topped with Parmesan, if desired.

White Chicken Chili

Level: Easy

Total: 1 hr 10 min

Active: 30 min

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
1 onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic, chopped
2 jalapeno peppers (1 diced, 1 halved; remove seeds for less heat)
1 poblano chile pepper, seeded & chopped
1 T. ground cumin
1 tsp. ground coriander
1/2 tsp. dried oregano
1/4 tsp. ground allspice
2 lbs. ground chicken
Kosher salt & freshly ground pepper
2 (15 oz.) cans white navy beans (do not drain)
1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chiles (do not drain)
2 c. low-sodium chicken broth
3 corn tortillas, torn, plus more for serving
1 bunch cilantro, leaves roughly chopped
Shredded cheddar cheese, sour cream and pickled jalapenos, for topping
Lime wedges, for serving

Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, both jalapenos, the poblano, cumin, coriander, oregano and allspice. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are softened and the spices are toasted, about 7 minutes. Add the chicken, 1 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Cook, stirring and breaking up the meat with a wooden spoon, until it starts browning, about 5 minutes.

Add the beans, canned chiles, chicken broth and 1-1/4 cups water; bring to a boil. Add the torn tortillas to the pot; reduce the heat to medium low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 40 minutes.

Remove the halved jalapeno from the chili and stir in all but a few tablespoons of the cilantro; season with 1/2 teaspoon salt and a few grinds of pepper. Serve with assorted toppings, the reserved cilantro, lime wedges and more tortillas.

Quote of the Week:

“So when I open the door on Halloween, I am confronted by three or four imaginary heroes, such as G.I. Joe, Conan the Barbarian and Oliver North, who would look very terrifying except that they are three feet tall and facing in random directions. They stand there silently for several seconds before an adult voice hisses from the darkness behind them, ‘Say Trick or Treat!’”

~ Dave Barry