

January 19: Warm Up with Soups

Soups can be the perfect way to warm up on a cold day. Soups vary in flavors, textures, and ingredients. These versatile dishes can be created from specific recipes but can also be thrown together based on vegetables and leftovers on hand.

Broth and stock made soups tend to be thin. Broth is a liquid made from beef, poultry, or combination of vegetables and stock is primarily made from bones. Allowing animal bones to simmer creates a stronger flavor, with fuller body and clarity than broth. These can be made at home or purchased commercially. Commercial broths, stocks, and soups are often high in sodium. Look for labels that state: less sodium, low sodium, or no sodium added.

Chowders are usually thick, rich soups that contain chunks of food like seafood or vegetables. A New England Chowder is recognized by a creamy milk base whereas a Manhattan chowder boasts a flavorful tomato base. Cream based soups are another thick, full flavored option. They contain milk or cream and are thickened with a mixture of flour and butter. Chili soups tend to be a spicier dish. These soups are a typically a thick consistency made with ground or chunks of meat. Chili can be created using beef, pork, chicken, or venison. Gumbo is a southern based soup that is heavily seasoned and in no way short of spice. The stew-like dish often blends multiple cultures with ingredients like; shrimp, crab, red pepper, filé powder (ground sassafras leaves), and okra. The secret of a good gumbo dish is the roux. A roux is made by combining equal parts of flour and oil and slowly cooking them together until they turn the color of a dirty, copper penny. A roux must be continuously stirred to prevent burning. If the roux is burnt, the gumbo is ruined.

In Europe, sweet soups have been long enjoyed as appetizers or as light endings to special dinners. The consistency of fruit soups can vary. Some may be as thin as punch or as thick as pudding. The thinner and less sweet soups are appetizers while the thicker and sweeter are better used as desserts.

Cream Soup Basic Recipe

Ingredients:

½ stick butter

2 Tbsp. flour

¾ cup milk

1 can evaporated milk

Seasonings to taste

Note- Types of Additions: Steamed broccoli & American cheese; chunks of baked potato with cheese, bacon pieces, and chives; lump crab meat and Old Bay Seasoning

Directions:

1. Melt butter over medium heat. Add flour and seasoning, stir until smooth.
2. Slowly add milk and stir until slightly thickened.
3. Add final ingredients. Do not allow the soup to boil.
4. Simmer on medium low for about 10-20 minutes. Stir often. Temperature should reach 160 °F.