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Let's Make Vegetable Soup!



Written by Steven Accardi

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Introduction

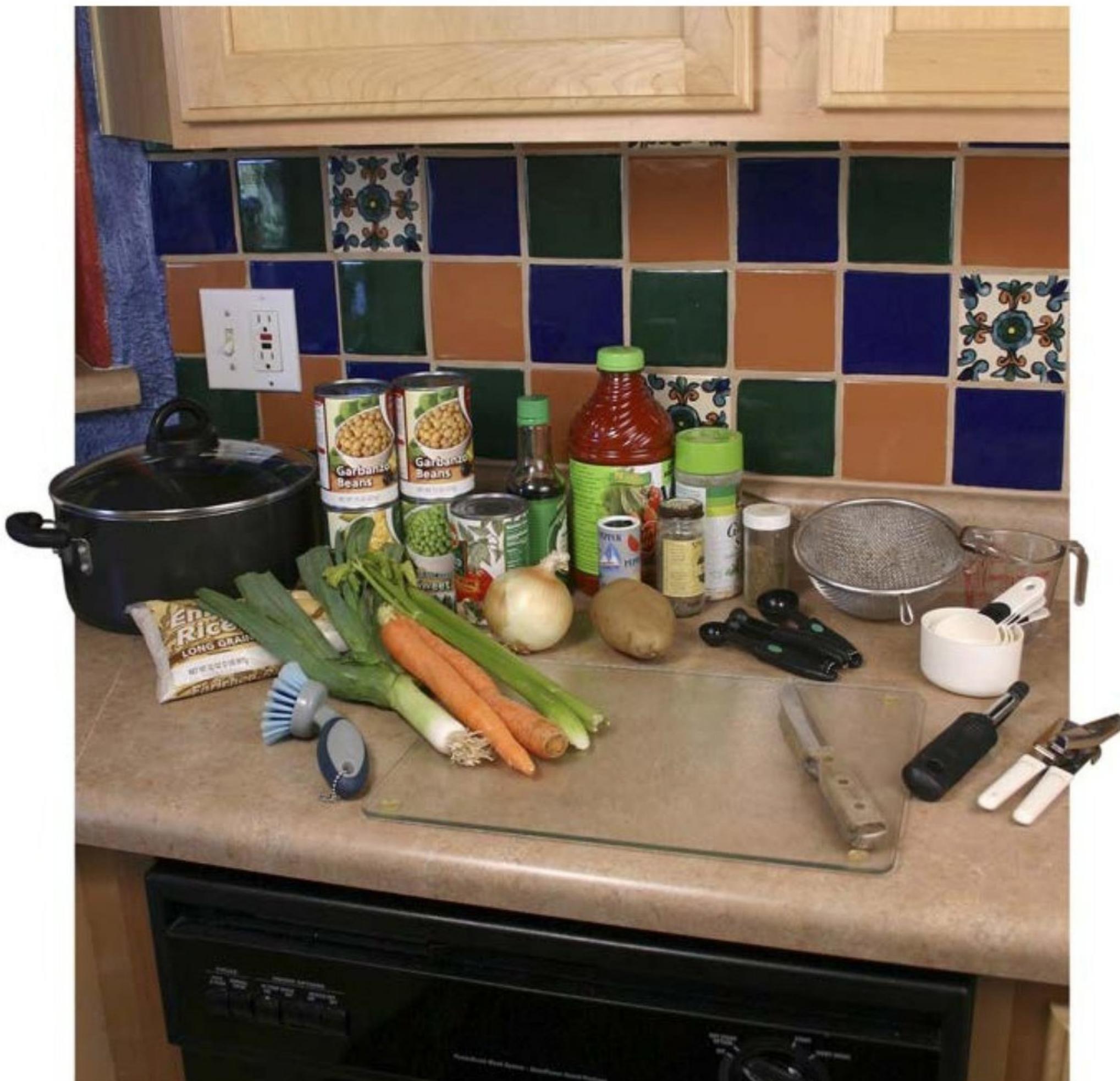
There's nothing more wholesome than settling down with a steaming bowl of soup on a cold winter day. It warms you up from

the inside and makes you feel so satisfied.

The greatest thing about soup is that there are enough varieties for everyone to find a favorite. Some soups are clear, some are creamy, some have beef or chicken or fish, some have



noodles or rice, some are spicy, and some are simple—the list of soups is almost endless. Pretty much anything tastes delectable in a soup, but vegetables are especially delicious.



Vegetables are packed with nutrients, minerals, and vitamins your body requires every day, and they're always tasty in soup. Have you ever cooked homemade vegetable soup before? It's surprisingly easy, and the soup is wonderfully healthy. Below you'll find a recipe for an excellent vegetable soup. All it requires is a large pot, a few ingredients, and just a pinch of patience. Want to give it a try?

Grab Your Ingredients

Homemade Vegetable Soup

- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 leek, chopped
- 1 medium-size yellow onion, chopped
- 1 potato, peeled and cubed
- 3 cups tomato-vegetable juice cocktail
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup long-grain white rice
- 1 (15-ounce) can of diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can of peas, drained
- 1 (15-ounce) can of whole-kernel corn, drained
- 2 (15-ounce) cans of garbanzo beans, drained
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder



Cook Safe!

Vegetable peelers can be sharp. Make sure you keep your fingertips and knuckles away from the blade.



To prepare for cooking, your first step is to collect the ingredients. You'll need a selection of fresh vegetables, including two carrots, two celery stalks, one medium-size yellow onion, one potato, and one **leek**. A leek is a green vegetable with a flavor something like an onion, but milder. Be sure to thoroughly scrub the celery and leek, and peel the onion, carrots, and potato.



Do You Know?

If you notice someone crying while he or she chops an onion, don't worry—it's just the smell. The juices released when you chop an onion make your eyes water and your nose run. A secret trick of the cooking trade is to chill the onion at least an hour before chopping it. Many cooks say this will prevent the onion from irritating your eyes.



Now, have an adult chop the vegetables into bite-size pieces. It's important to cut all the vegetable pieces about the same thickness to **ensure** that they cook evenly.

Put It Together

Now that you've gathered your ingredients and chopped the vegetables, it's time to put everything together in your large pot. Set the pot on the stove or counter; it's not time for the burner just yet. Once the adult has finished chopping, gather the vegetable pieces and throw them in the pot.

Next, you'll create the **broth**, or liquid base of your soup. Find a liquid measuring cup—it resembles a small glass pitcher with markings on the side. Measure three cups of tomato-vegetable juice cocktail and pour them into the pot, being careful to avoid spilling. Then, measure two cups of cold water, and dump that into the pot, too. Lastly, measure out one cup of uncooked long-grain white rice using a dry measuring cup, and shake it into the broth.





Cook Safe!

Can openers can have sharp blades. They can also leave sharp edges on the lid and the rim of the can. Be careful when handling sharp metal.



Now it's time to add your canned vegetables. Beans and peas are loaded with protein, a nutrient that helps build strong muscles and gives dishes a meaty flavor. For this step, you'll need to

operate a can opener. Both hand-cranked and electric can openers can be tricky, so you may want an adult to help. Once you've gotten the hang of it, open the cans of diced tomatoes, peas, whole-kernel corn, and garbanzo beans.

After you've opened the cans, you'll have to drain their contents. The simplest way to perform this task is with a **strainer**, which resembles a bowl with lots of little holes in it. Strainers hold solids while letting liquids flow away.

First, place the strainer in the sink and dump the can of tomatoes into it. Then, lift the strainer and gently shake it over the sink, draining as much liquid as possible away from the tomatoes. Finally, once the strainer stops dripping, carry it to the pot and slide the tomatoes in. You may want to hold your palm under the strainer to catch any last few drops of liquid. You wouldn't want that mess on the floor—it's much easier to rinse your hands than it is to mop.



Repeat the above steps with the cans of peas, corn, and garbanzo beans. Put the strainer in the sink, empty a can into the strainer, shake the strainer until it stops dripping, and then dump the contents into the pot. The pot is nearly full, isn't it? That's because you're almost finished, but you've saved the best ingredients for last: the spices.





Spice It Up

Spices make foods **unique** and tasty, and they'll give your soup a distinct flavor. They're the secret ingredients in your masterpiece. You measure spices with teaspoons and tablespoons, but these aren't the familiar spoons you eat with. Find a set of measuring spoons that includes a tablespoon, teaspoon, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon.



The first spice you'll add is soy sauce. Soy sauce gives foods a salty tang, and it will enhance the flavor of your vegetables. Measure a tablespoon of soy sauce and pour it into the pot.

Next, measure a teaspoon of dried dill weed and sprinkle it into the pot. Doesn't dill weed have a fantastic smell? It's often found in **Mediterranean** dishes. Next, measure $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of ground black pepper and toss it in. Pepper livens up just about any dish. Finally, measure $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of dried thyme and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of garlic powder and shake them into the pot, too. Both will give your soup a **hearty** flavor. You're almost finished!



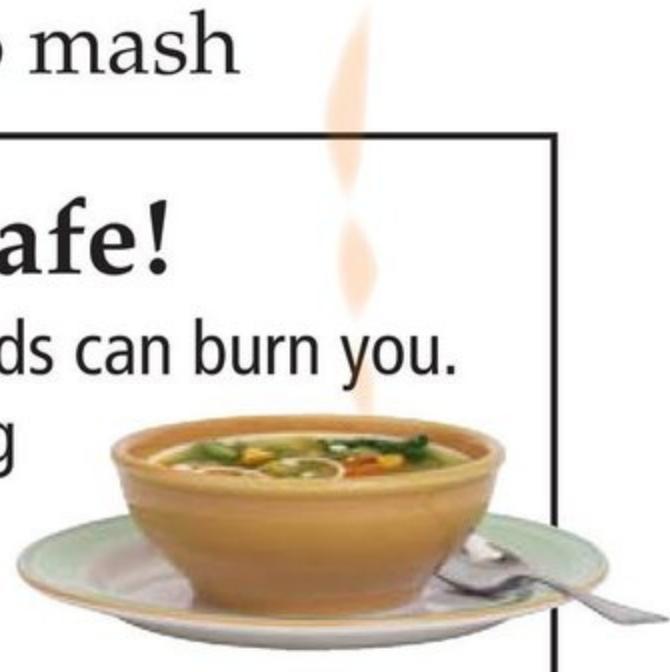


Let's Cook

Now you're ready to cook your soup. Start by turning on the stove burner under the pot to its highest setting. If you aren't sure about operating your stove, ask an adult. Then, make sure all your ingredients combine evenly by stirring the contents of the pot with a large wooden spoon. Take care not to mash the vegetables or splash the broth out of the pot. You want your soup to be the best it can be.

Cook Safe!

Hot liquids can burn you.
Avoid spilling hot liquids on yourself.



At this stage, you can probably take a much-deserved break because your soup will need some time to cook. You'll probably want to clean up the kitchen. You might have made quite a mess, but that's okay—it's all part of the cooking process!



Allow the soup to heat on the burner until it begins to **boil**. The soup is boiling when the liquid bubbles rapidly. Once the soup boils, lower the heat until it's almost off and the soup begins to **simmer**. A liquid simmers when it barely shivers with tiny bubbles. Cover the pot of soup with a lid.





Keep the soup simmering slowly and gently for about half an hour. Soon enough, you'll get a whiff of its enticing aroma. Isn't it great? Every once in a while, gently stir the pot with the large wooden spoon. That stirring ensures that all the ingredients and flavors blend to create a delectable whole. It'll also prevent any vegetables from burning onto the bottom of the pot.



Let's Eat!

After about thirty minutes, use your wooden spoon to fish out a piece of vegetable, such as a chunk of carrot. Blow on it a few times so it's cool enough to taste and then take a bite to test the texture. If the carrot is **tender**, or nice and soft, then you're finished. If it's still hard and crunchy, let the soup simmer for several more minutes. Taste another vegetable every few minutes until you're satisfied with the tenderness. But don't overcook your soup—you don't want your vegetables to be mushy. Once you're happy with the soup, turn off the heat and serve your delicious creation with a **ladle**.

What do you think—not too shabby, right? You can serve your soup with a grilled cheese sandwich, some bread and butter, or all by itself. You can also store the leftovers in the refrigerator and reheat them on the stove or in the microwave. You probably have enough for warm, healthful lunches all week. And if you enjoyed this vegetable soup, you can follow the recipe steps using different types of vegetables. Try cooking soup with zucchini, broccoli, mushrooms, or red peppers. Almost any vegetable tastes fantastic in soup!





Now you can enjoy a hot, delicious homemade meal and feel proud of what you've accomplished. Not only are you eating vegetables full of essential vitamins and nutrients, but you also made this delicious soup like a professional chef.

Glossary

boil (<i>v.</i>)	to become hot enough to bubble (p. 18)
broth (<i>n.</i>)	the liquid base of a soup (p. 9)
ensure (<i>v.</i>)	to make sure (p. 8)
hearty (<i>adj.</i>)	dense and full of satisfying flavor (p. 15)
ladle (<i>n.</i>)	a kitchen tool with a scoop and a handle used to serve liquids (p. 20)
leek (<i>n.</i>)	a long green-and-white vegetable that tastes like a mild onion (p. 7)
Mediterranean (<i>adj.</i>)	coming from the countries around the Mediterranean Sea, such as Italy, Greece, and Turkey (p. 15)
simmer (<i>v.</i>)	to bubble very slowly (p. 18)
strainer (<i>n.</i>)	a kitchen tool shaped like a bowl with many holes in it; it is used to drain liquids away from solids (p. 11)

tender (*adj.*) soft, but not mushy (p. 20)

unique (*adj.*) one of a kind (p. 13)

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