

EASY SOUP RECIPES TO THE RESCUE!

Less than enchanting economic times prompt you to look for ways to save on the grocery bill, while hectic days encourage you to have a small stockpile of meals that can be brought quickly to the table.

One of the easiest ways to satisfy both objectives is to spend a Saturday making a couple of quarts each of two or three easy soup recipes. Portion the soups in individual or family size servings to freeze for future cheap, quick-to-fix and delicious meals.

Here are two such easy soup recipes to get you started. These recipes can be followed exactly as given, but they are also generic recipes. Substitutions give a similar texture and body, but with different flavors. Suggestion for alternate ingredients follows each of these easy soup recipes.

One uses a cream base while the other uses a broth. You'll be surprised to find how a few minor adjustments to each recipe can provide many distinctly different easy soup recipes.

EASY CLAM CHOWDER SOUP

3 Tb. Butter
3 Tb. flour
6 cups milk
2 large potatoes, cooked until almost done, diced in 2-inch cubes
2 3.5-ounce cans clams, with juice
1 15-ounce can corn
3 large mushrooms, sliced
1 large onion, diced
3 green onions, sliced
1 tsp. Thyme

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Use a whisk to mix in the flour. Cook over low heat until the roux thickens. Gradually add the milk, stirring constantly. Add the remaining ingredients and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, for 30-45 minutes, or until soup acquires the thickness you prefer. Garnish with fresh parsley if you like.

Instead of, or in addition to clams, try shrimp, crab, Krab(, crawfish or catfish nuggets. Substitute celery, water chestnuts or spinach for any of the vegetables. Chives are good in place of green onions. Use a teaspoon of tarragon

or 1/4 cup fresh cilantro in place of the thyme.

EASY CHICKEN VEGETABLE SOUP

8 cups chicken broth
2 chicken breasts, cooked and diced in 1-inch cubes
1 15-ounce can green beans
1 15-ounce can corn
1 large red bell pepper, diced
1 large onion, diced
2-3 stalks celery, sliced thinly
1 tsp. sage
2 tsp. minced garlic
a pinch of cayenne

Drain the canned vegetables. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan over medium heat. Stir occasionally. Cook for 45 minutes.

Turkey, sausage or diced ham works just as well as chicken. In place of the green beans, try fresh, sliced zucchini added to the soup just 5 minutes before serving. Substitute one orange and one yellow bell pepper for the beans and corn for a colorful and tasty soup. Rosemary, thyme or marjoram can replace the sage.

Once you try these easy soup recipes, you'll see how adaptable they are. Use your imagination. Don't forget to use any leftovers from the frig. In just a few hours, you can have many lunch or dinner servings ready to go in minutes!