

Healthful Soups - Teacher's Guide

Objective: To provide information for making nutritious soups from what's on hand in the kitchen.

Sample statement: ***"Soups add variety to meals, are cheap, and warm you up on a cold, winter day. Soup is nourishing and comforting - nearly everyone likes soup. And, there are soups for everyone's taste - from the most delicate broth to the most hearty chowder."***

Sample **ANCHOR** questions for participants:

- ***"How many times a week do you serve soup for lunch or dinner?"***
- ***"What kinds of soup does your family like to eat?" "What kinds of stock do you like to use for your soup?"***

Background Information - Choose the appropriate information below to **ADD** to your lesson.

What are soups?

Soups are mixtures of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables, or any combination of these, that are simmered in a liquid. They range from a light broth which is served as part of the meal, to thick, hearty chowders and stew-like soups which are meals in themselves.

Soup Stocks

When we think of soup we often think of a liquid food. The liquid base of soup is often referred to as the soup stock. Soups are generally prepared using a stock, which is made by slowly simmering meat, poultry, fish, and/or vegetables, in water with seasonings, then straining before adding other ingredients. There are four different varieties of stock: Beef stock, vegetable stock, fish stock, and chicken stock.

Homemade stocks are time-consuming to make. If you choose not to spend the time preparing a stock, good tasting, time saving substitutes to use are cubes and granules of beef-, chicken-, or vegetable-flavored bouillon, cans of condensed broth, and dried soup mixes.

Soup Ingredients

The varieties of soups, as well as the list of possible ingredients (meat, beans, grains & vegetables) are endless. Soups are a good way to use the small quantities of leftover meat and vegetables that accumulate in the refrigerator. Fresh, frozen, dried, and canned vegetables may be used in soup. Many soups thicken naturally because they contain ingredients which act as thickeners, such as barley, rice, pasta, beans and potatoes. If the soup does not thicken during cooking, it can be thickened with flour or

cornstarch. To thicken a soup with flour or cornstarch, blend either of them with an equal amount of cold water to form a "slurry" . (General rule: One tablespoon of flour will thicken about 1 1/2 cups of soup, and one tablespoon of cornstarch will thicken about 3 cups of soup.) Gradually add the slurry to the simmering soup. Cook, stirring constantly, until the soup is thickened and the uncooked starch flavor disappears.

Add salt and pepper sparingly when preparing soups. During cooking, the soup is reduced in volume and the salt flavor intensifies. The same applies to herbs and spices in soups. Season lightly at first; just before serving, taste the soup and add additional seasonings if necessary.

Storing Soups

Most soups can be stored in the refrigerator up to three days. Some also freeze well for about three months.

Soups that are frozen may lose some of their flavor because seasonings are affected by freezing. It is a good idea to make final seasoning adjustments while reheating the soup. Ingredients such as potatoes do not freeze well so add them to the soup while reheating.

To freeze soup, first refrigerate it until well chilled. Then ladle the soup into freezer containers, leaving at least 1/2-inch headspace. Thaw soup in the refrigerator or, if reheating frozen soup, add 1/4 cup water or more and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally.

Soup Garnishes

Add a little something extra on top of the soup that complements or enhances the soup's flavor. Try fresh minced herbs, minced onion, grated cheese, chopped hard-cooked eggs or nuts, a few berries, thin rounds of carrots, sliced mushrooms, a slice of lemon, or a dollop of low fat sour cream. Garnishes are an easy way to make a simple soup look fancy.

Commercial Soups

To avoid the straight-from-the-can effect, experiment with soup combinations such as mixing Beef Broth with Tomato or Cream of Mushroom with Chicken and Rice. Add more vegetables and cooked meat and a touch of flavor with your favorite spices to create your own favorites. The possible combinations are unlimited. Commercial soups are generally high in sodium. Choose reduced-sodium soups when possible.

Dry Soup Mixes

Make your own dried soup recipes. Buy bags of dried ingredients (dried green split peas, lentils, barley rice or macaroni) and mix together for a quick soup mix. Refer to handout "Palouse Soup Mix*."

Tips For Making Soup

1. Sauté vegetables in margarine or oil before adding them to soup. This seals in their flavor and keeps them firm. Give onions a little extra time: slow cooking brings out their natural sweetness.
2. You can make very good soup with water, so the lack of a stock shouldn't stop you from trying a recipe. But a rich, homemade stock will add depth of flavor that water cannot duplicate.
3. Most soups improve with age and can be made a day or two in advance. And leftovers freeze well.
4. It is easy to remove fat from soup if you chill it first; the fat will solidify on top and can be removed easily with a spoon.
5. Leftovers make terrific soups. Sauté aromatic vegetables such as onions, carrots, and garlic in oil or margarine, add bite-size pieces of leftover meats and vegetables along with a little stock or milk, and simmer until flavorful.
6. To ensure that soups arrive at the table piping hot, serve them in tureens, bowls with lids or well-heated cups.
7. For a rich brown color, brown meat carefully. Commercial coloring can also be used.
8. Add a little bouillon to a cream soup or a weak homemade stock to increase flavor.
9. Don't overcook the vegetables in soup.
10. Bring the soup to a boil but immediately lower heat to simmer. Boiling soup too long toughens meats and evaporates liquid broth.

Tips for Making Simple Soups

Use Soup Stocks or Commercial Canned Soups*

- chicken, beef or vegetable stock; homemade or canned broth
- canned cream soups; cream of mushroom, chicken, tomato, etc.

Approximately one cup of broth or prepared creamed soups per serving needed. If other liquids (tomato sauce, milk) will be added, take this into consideration.

*Commercial canned broth or soups are generally high in sodium. Choose reduced-sodium soups when possible.

Rice, Noodles or Macaroni

Add one of these to your soup:

Rice

2 cups water
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup rice

Heat water until boiling. Add salt. Stir in rice. Cover and cook over low heat 25 minutes.

Noodles or Macaroni

3 cups water
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup noodles or macaroni

Heat water until boiling. Add salt. Stir in noodles or macaroni. Remove from heat and cover. After 15 minutes drain.

Vegetables (canned or frozen)

Add one or more of these:

- Green beans Corn
- Lima beans Carrots
- Peas Potatoes
- Onions Celery
- Tomatoes

Meat or Beans

Add one or both of these:

- Cooked or canned meats (remove fat).
- Canned or cooked dry beans.

Activities (APPLY):

Children

A. Read to young children the book *Stone Soup* by Marcia Brown. Make stone soup with the children. Have the children bring vegetables (carrots, peas, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, canned beans, cabbage, celery, etc.) from home. Children can help wash, cut and prepare the vegetables for the soup. Use safety precautions when allowing children to cut vegetables. Make sure cutting vegetables is age-appropriate. In a large pot add chicken or beef broth or tomato juice. (You will need about 1/2 cup per child). Add the vegetables to the pot of broth. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer. Cook until vegetables are soft.

Adults or Adolescents

- A. Have participants bring vegetables or supply the food to make a pot of soup. Use canned broth or creamed soups as the stock if time is an issue.
- B. Make dried soup mixes. Refer to handout "Palouse Soup Mix".
- C. Create soup recipes. Have participants work in groups to create soups that are suitable for side dishes or hearty soups that are meals in themselves. Refer to handout "Make Your Own Soup".

Handout (AWAY) Recipes

"Simple Soups"

"Create Your Own Soup from What's on Hand"

"Creamed Soups"

"Palouse Soup Mix"

"Basic Chicken Stock"

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