



Information

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SHARE THE WARMTH WITH A SOUP EXCHANGE

When it's cold outside nothing tastes better than a hot bowl of soup. Soup is comfort food that warms you from the inside out, while providing a delicious blend of flavors. There are just so many ways to make a sandwich, but there are a million ways to make a bowl of soup. The best soups are homemade and we've provided you with a couple of unique recipes beyond the typical chicken noodle or cream of tomato.

Soups come in a multitude of flavors, as many as A to Z. You can have them warm or cold, milk based or broth based, with meat or without. When was the last time you indulged yourself in all the wonderful choices...cream of asparagus, corn chowder, beef and barley, split pea, gumbo, and everyone's favorite Maryland crab. My mouth waters just thinking about all the choices and I'm headed to the kitchen to get out the soup pot.

For a healthy meal alternative serve soup as the main item or entrée. Serve with a roll or muffin, glass of milk, and fresh fruit and you have a delicious and nutritious meal for your family. To save time make a big batch of soup on the weekend and freeze for future meals. Realize that soups containing rice and pasta do not freeze well.

A great way to expand your repertoire of choices is to host a soup exchange. Invite five friends over and ask each to bring six quarts of their favorite soup. Give everyone instructions so the exchange goes smoothly. Here's how it works:

1. Prepare a large pot of soup prior to the exchange.
2. Pour into quart size containers, label, and freeze.
3. The day of the soup exchange, thaw one quart of the soup, in the refrigerator, which will be used to sample at the exchange.
4. To bring your frozen soup to the exchange place in a cooler with ice to keep frozen.
5. If desired, bring five copies of the soup recipe to share with friends.

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As host of the soup exchange have plenty of stove pots or microwave containers available so you can heat up the one quart containers of soup that have already been thawed. This gives your guests the opportunity to sample the soups they will take home. Serve with a salad, some crusty bread, and a glass of wine and you're sure to have a fun evening with friends.

Soup...ummm....ummmm...good!

FRESH SPINACH SOUP

1 large onion, chopped
1 tablespoon butter or margarine
1 pound fresh spinach leaves, washed and drained
1 medium potato, peeled and quartered
1 can beef broth
1 cup hot water
1/4 teaspoon pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
1/2 cup skim milk
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese

Sauté onion in butter or margarine in electric skillet. Add spinach, potato, beef broth, water, pepper, and garlic. Bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes until potato is tender. Spoon half of the spinach mixture into electric mixer container and process until smooth. Repeat with remaining spinach mixture. Pour back into electric skillet and stir in milk. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until thoroughly heated. Pour into bowls to serve and sprinkle with 1 teaspoon Parmesan cheese. Makes 6 servings.

OVEN BAKED BEAN SOUP

8 ounces dried white beans and enough water to cover the beans
5 cups fat-free chicken broth
1/2 cup ketchup
1/4 cup molasses
1 cup onion, diced
2 cups raw sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
1 cup green pepper, diced
Pinch ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
Black pepper to taste

Place the beans in a large container and add enough cold water to cover them by several inches. Refrigerate overnight. Drain and rinse. NOTE: For quicker soaking, place the beans in a pot, cover with water, bring to a boil; cover them, remove from the heat and allow to stand one hour. Drain and proceed.

Preheat oven to 350°. Place all ingredients into a large oven-proof Dutch Oven and heat on top of the stove on high. Bring to a boil, stir well and cover. Place the Dutch Oven in the middle of the oven and allow to cook until the beans and sweet potatoes are tender, about one and a half hours. Serve hot with a salad or side of lowfat slaw. Makes 6 servings, calories 240.

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