

THE BIG SOUP

This Big Soup could change your life! It's a rich, hearty, almost-instant dinner with infinite variations. The base is a chicken soup made with good canned chicken broth, and the standard onion, celery, carrot, and dried herbs. To this basic broth, you add whatever fresh, canned or frozen vegetables, pasta and/or meats that you have around. These last ingredients need only enough cooking time to warm up in the basic soup. Here's how The Big Soup works for six.

First, make the basic soup from:
2 cans good chicken broth
4 chicken breasts or other parts

1 large onion, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 carrot, chopped
2 sprigs parsley
1 teaspoon thyme and/or
1 teaspoon dillweed
1 bay leaf

Combine these ingredients in a soup pot and add water to cover. While the soup is simmering, scavenge your cupboards for any of the following:

1 small can chick-peas, pinto beans and/or plum tomatoes
1 medium can corn
½ package frozen okra and/or asparagus, artichokes, pea pods;
2 potatoes, chopped
1 small zucchini, chopped

1 green pepper, chopped
¼ lb. sliced mushrooms
¼ cup (or more) rice or pasta
1 length seasoned sausage

Cubes of leftover meat

Add fresh vegetables and rice after 15 minutes; canned, frozen ingredients and pasta after 20 minutes. Soup takes 30 minutes in all.

Variations: For more, add additional vegetables and broth. For two, make the same amount, freeze the rest.

For creamed soup: Add ½ to 1 cup cream 5 minutes before serving. Don't boil cream.

For puréed soup: Put all ingredients, except chicken and bones, in blender until smooth.



CHOUCROUTE GARNIE

(Sauerkraut garnished with meats)

This traditional French dish is easy and fun. Sauerkraut is cooked with vegetables, then pieces of wurst, sausage, Canadian bacon and/or ham are buried in it. The steaming platter is served with boiled potatoes, mustard, black bread and beer.

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons oil
2 medium onions, sliced
1 clove garlic, minced

1 tart apple, pared and diced
1 carrot, sliced thinly or grated
1 cup dry white wine or beer
1 bay leaf; 8 juniper berries;
10 peppercorns; 2 cloves; parsley
sprigs
2 16-oz. cans sauerkraut
1 lb. Canadian bacon or ham,
sliced ¼"
4 knockwursts or other sausage

To prepare: In a heavy pot, cook the oil, onions, garlic, apple and carrot, covered, until onions brown slightly. Add wine and herbs. (Tell guests not to munch peppercorns!) Let simmer while you briefly rinse sauerkraut

(skip rinse for more "sauer" flavor) and press dry. Stir into pot, then add meats and cook till well heated 20-25 minutes. Serves 2 (twice), 4, or double for 8.

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