

Exploring greens in easy-to-make soup

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD,
Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutritionist

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment focuses on nourishing greens and how to easily make your own soups and stocks (see photo right). Soup is a good way to use your leftovers in new ways while managing your food resources wisely and economically. During the winter rains, warm soup feels good. Soup can be nourishing and soothing.

Chicken Soup with Greens

- 1 quart broth, salted, vegetable or bone broth
- 1 cup brown rice, cooked, or cannellini white beans
- ½ cup chopped parsley and/or leeks
- 1 can cooked chicken meat or leftover chicken, cut
- 1 medium carrot, thin sliced or ½ cup frozen vegetables
- 1 cup greens, chopped (choose from combination of Swiss chard, beet tops, kohlrabi, collard, kale, mustard, spinach, etc.)

This is a simple soup to make the point how simple it can be to eat greens with the aid of a few basic kitchen staples.

Get your children to help you pick out the greens (from the garden or the store). Tear them together while talking about how they feel, look, taste, etc. Wash them again in a colander after handling them.

Heat broth (chicken, veggie or just frozen vegetable cooking water). Add other ingredients. Heat until greens are tender.

Exploring greens?

Nutrition message for children: Greens help us run and jump, they help us to see well, they make our bones and teeth strong, and they help us to not get sick.

Nutrition message for parents: Greens are nutrient-dense. This means they are low in calories and loaded with vitamins and minerals. Greens are high in vitamins A and C, folic acid, iron and calcium. Vitamin A supports vision. Iron carries oxygen in the blood and supports immunity. Vitamin C supports immunity. Folic acid (commonly found in leaves/ foliage) protects us in many ways, including neural-tube defect prevention. Calcium supports strong bones and teeth.

How do greens feel, look and taste? Explore this with your children. Some are tender or soft. Some are waxy or hairy. Some leaves are very big, others are tiny. Most are green, but they can have other colors too, like purple. The dark leafy vegetables range from earthy to peppery in flavor. Some are simply the tops of root vegetables such as beets and turnips.

Seasons: Long growing season – almost year-round on the Oregon Coast for some greens such as kale and collard greens.

Storage: Store in the refrigerator and use as soon as possible (using the tender greens first). Generally remove and discard damaged, yellowed or wilted leaves. Rinse greens well (both sides) under cold running water and pat dry. Hidden dirt often clings to the undersides of the leaves. Greens often last longer if they are not washed until you plan to use them.

Preparation: Tear out and discard tough stems and center ribs. Use leaves whole or cut/tear into bite-size pieces or shred. Place about 1¼ pound greens in 4-5 quart pan with 1 inch of water. Boil covered until tender to bite (5-15 minutes). Drain.

Season with butter, olive oil, lemon juice, vinegar or tamari.

Serving ideas: Excellent as a side dish with almost any entrée – try canned black-eyed peas with your favorite BBQ sauce on brown rice with greens.

Add to soups. Either use leftover cooked greens or add them fresh to soup and heat until the greens are tender.

Make soup stocks from bones or vegetables

For vegetable stock: I recommend saving the cooking water from vegetables and freezing it in glass canning jars to use later for soup.

In addition, I make vegetable soup stock from fresh vegetable scraps, such as stems, tops, cores and peels. In other words, before putting them into my compost I first extract some of the flavor and nutrients for me. Then I put the spent vegetable scraps into the compost.

Please note: I rinse the scraps to be sure they are clean. Also, I do not use rotten produce. This goes straight to the compost.

For bone broth: This is a traditional recipe that is both medicinal and nourishing. Its high mineral content makes it easy



to digest and is highly nutritious, especially the gelatin obtained from the bones.

The broth also supports strong bones and detoxification of the liver.

Ingredients

Bones, raw or cooked from poultry, fish, shellfish, beef, lamb or wild game
Water
Vinegar, apple cider or balsamic (2 tablespoons per quart of water or 2 pounds of bones)

Directions

1. Place bones in a slow cooker or stove pot on low heat and cover with water.
2. Simmer gently for 12 hours.
3. Strain bones to collect broth/stock.

Siletz Tribal Head Start offers my time to support family nutrition over the telephone (503-588-5446). Please contact me if you have nutrition concerns about your Head Start child.

Crafty Snacks

By Nancy Ludwig, MS, RDN, LD,
Siletz Tribal Head Start Nutritionist

As part of my role as a consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families. This segment focuses on nourishing snacks that foster creativity and can be made at home with supervision. These snacks can replace commercial snack bars and can thereby save money while allowing families to use the specific ingredients they like best.

I suggest that you make your own bars with the fruits and nuts or seeds you love best. Head Start classrooms are nut-free because of potential allergens. Therefore, our featured item includes seeds rather than nuts. The process is easy and works best with a food processor, which usually can be found at a thrift store or garage sale if you don't already have one.

Make your own fruit and nut bars

Step 1: Figure out what ingredients you like and put them all together. Chop the entire mixture up in the food processor.

Step 2: Roll the dough into a ball, then place the dough between two sheets of wax paper and roll it flat (a thin bar is a seemingly bigger portion with less of a sugar load).

Step 3: Cut it into bars or festive shapes with cookie cutters and store them in airtight containers. They last at room temperature for several days and for up to several months in the refrigerator.

Please note: If you cut them into festive shapes, you will want to store them in rigid plastic containers to retain their shape. You also can roll them into balls (or do this with the pieces that are too small for the cookie cutters).

Below are some combinations inspired by *Eat Like a Dinosaur – Recipe & Guidebook for Gluten-Free Kids* by The Paleo Parents and published by Victory Belt Publishing Inc.

The trick is that whatever amount of fruit you choose, use the same amount of nuts/seeds or less. Dates (specifically Medjool) offer the best consistency. If the fruit, nuts or seeds are very dry, you may need to add up to 1 teaspoon of water to the dough in order to form a ball.

Festive fruit and seed shapes

These bars contain no nuts and can be rolled or flattened to create festive and crafty snacks with a cookie cutter.

Sprinkle or roll in shredded coconut, carob, cocoa powder or cinnamon. Winter snowballs can be created with coconut.

½ cup dates, pitted

½ cup dried apricots and/or cranberries, dried, sweetened w/apple juice

½ cup pumpkin seeds, raw or roasted

1/3 cup sunflower seeds, raw or roasted

2 tablespoons sesame seeds, raw or roasted

Sugar Cookie Bar

Some say these cashew bars taste like sugar cookies

1 cup dates, pitted
1 cup cashews

Winter Rainbow Bar

These flavors and colors are reminiscent of Christmas.

½ cup dates, pitted
½ cup cranberries, dried and sweetened
1 cup pistachio nuts

Favorite Bars

Combine favorite ingredients.

½ cup dates, pitted
½ cup dried apricots
1 cup almonds

Movie Bars

The chocolate chips are reserved for something extra special.

1 cup dates
¼ cup coconut flakes
¼ cup dark chocolate chips
1 cup macadamia nuts or peanuts

Siletz Tribal Head Start

If you have not sent in an application for your child to attend Siletz Tribal Head Start, it's not too late. Call 541-444-2532 or 800-922-1399 to request that an application be sent to you.

Applications also are available on the Tribal website (ctsi.nsn.us) and at the Siletz, Salem and Portland area offices.