

A warm winter soup

BY BRIAN MEDFORD

Soup and I are similar in that neither of us seem to take a very good picture.

When I'm looking through cookbooks or at cooking blogs, I skim right past the soup options. In pictures, soup looks bland, boring and awkward, much like the high school graduation photo my mother still displays in her house. She prizes it, but we both know it isn't the best.

The only soups that get a visual pass are tomato or butternut squash. They're bright, and in the Pacific Northwest, how can you not embrace something that remotely resembles the sun?

Soup is the epitome of comfort food. For me, it elicits feelings of home, warmth and steamy goodness, images of hands-off cooking, that satisfy my multi-tasking spirit.

Over the past few months, the North Coast has received both snow and rainfall, leaving more than a fair share of basements soaked. The snow was delightful, the rain was not, but both events left me searching for

solace. That's where soup comes in handy.

Seasonal soup is satisfying and heartening, particularly since its ingredients are readily available at the local grocery store. I'm not scrambling to find vine-ripened tomatoes in the middle of winter. (Even if you can find them, don't. It's not going to taste good.)

While soup may be the ugly duckling of the cookbook world, it's the swan of home comfort food. Just resist the urge to take a picture. Enjoy the moment and the taste. I only wish the same could work for senior yearbook photos.

Farro, Cabbage and Parmesan Soup (Serves 4)

Adapted from Joshua McFadden

Ingredients:

- 1 pound green cabbage
- 1/4 cup, plus more olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- One medium onion, thinly sliced
- Three to four garlic cloves, smashed and peeled



Brian Medford
Soup is a classic comfort food in the winter.

- Two springs of thyme
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 2/3 cup uncooked farro
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- Shaved Parmesan (or pecorino) to finish

Preparation:

- Cut out the cabbage core and chop it finely. Cut the leaves into fine shreds or about 1/8-inch ribbons. Set aside.
- Heat 1/4 cup olive oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, salt and pepper. Stir frequently until the onion starts to soften. This will take about 5 to 7 minutes.
- Add garlic and cook another two minutes.
- Add shredded cabbage and herb sprigs. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cover

the pot. Let it steam a bit to soften the leaves, then toss the cabbage to stir it well with the other ingredients in the pot.

• Cook, covered, until the cabbage is sweet and tender, about 20 to 25 minutes. Stir occasionally.

• Meanwhile, in a small skillet, heat 2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium heat and add uncooked farro. Toast it, stirring, for a few minutes.

• When the cabbage is ready, stir in some vinegar. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add toasted farro and chicken broth.

• Bring mixture to a simmer and cook for 30 to 35 minutes, until farro is tender and the flavors are married. The soup will be very thick. Add another 1/2 cup broth or water if you'd like.

• Taste and adjust seasoning. Stir in lemon juice, then finish with a drizzle of olive oil and shaved Parmesan.

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