

THURSDAY | NOVEMBER 5, 2020

Betty Kaiser: Cook's Corner Super Simple Soups



Betty Kaiser

Every year when autumn leaves begin to fall, I pull out my soup recipes from their summer hiatus hiding and decide which one to choose. It's sort of like a treasure hunt as I'm looking for old friends.

So many choices. Where to begin?

I narrow down the choices by deciding if I want a meat based treat or something vegetarian.

Soup is as old as the hills and probably goes back to the caveman days when people threw whatever they had into a kettle and cooked it over an open fire.

Later generations discovered that a few herbs made the food taste better and it's been a staple meal ever since.

Every nation has its own special soups. China has Egg Drop soup; It's French Onion soup in France; Miso soup in Japan; White Bean soup in Cuba; Butternut Squash soup is the choice in North Africa; Borshch or Beetroot soup is a favorite in Russian.

And the varieties con-

tinue all over the world.

Just for fun, I Googled the top five best-selling soups in America and they are as follows:

1. Chicken Noodle Soup
2. Tomato Soup
3. Clam Chowder
4. Potato Soup (that surprised me!)
5. Minestrone (another surprise).

Now, I don't know about you, but for me, soup preparation can be an all day process. I usually start with sautéing onions, celery and carrots for the broth base and go from there.

Sometimes it's a tomato base other times it's a creamy base. But almost always I'm building the ingredients layer by layer and sometimes, hour by hour.

So, I started collecting what I call "Super Swift Soup" recipes for those times when I don't have time. I usually find such recipes on pasta packages or cans unless I happen to cut one out of a magazine.

They're hard to find but I have three that I'm going to share with you today.

Chicken or Turkey Noodle Express (a Swanson recipe)

- 2 cans (14 1/2 oz each) Chicken Broth (3 1/2 cups)
- Generous dash pepper

- 1 medium carrot, sliced (1/2 cup)
- 1 cup cubed, cooked turkey or chicken

- 1/2 cup uncooked medium egg noodles
- 1 stalk celery, sliced (1/2 cup)

Mix broth, pepper, carrot and celery in medium saucepan.

Heat over medium high heat; bring to a boil.

Stir in noodles. Reduce heat to medium. Cook 10 minutes, stirring often. Add turkey and heat through. Serves 4

- **NOTE:** I find these portions a little skimpy. So I would double this recipe.

Shortcut Minestrone Soup (A Barilla Recipe)

Keep it classic with marinara or mix it up with other pasta sauce flavors like tomato basil or roasted garlic.

- 1 (14 oz) bag frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 (23 oz) jar marinara sauce
- 5 cups water (more as needed)
- 1 can 12 oz cut green beans
- 1 can drained and rinsed white beans
- 4 ounces small pasta (or tortellini)
- Lemon pepper

Heat the frozen vegetables in a large saucepan.

Add the marinara sauce and 5 cups water. Bring to

a boil.

Stir in green beans, white beans and pasta. Add more water if needed.

Cook until pasta is done, about 5 minutes.

Top with pepper and parmesan cheese.

Serves 6

Super Swift Chili Bean Soup

- 1 pound ground meat or less (beef, turkey or whatever)
- 1 medium onion, diced

- 1 8-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2-3 cups water
- 1 can tomatoes
- 1 can chili beans
- 1 small can corn
- 1 can diced green chilies

- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon oregano

Saute meat and onions. Drain excess fat.

Add all other ingredients and bring to a boil.

Turn down heat and simmer 2 hours or longer.

Taste for salt and other spices shortly before serving.

Garnish with grated cheddar cheese or sour cream.

Serves 4-5

"Keep it simple and keep it seasonal with Betty Kaiser's Cook's Corner."



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

By Mary Ellen
"Angel Scribe"

A baby... Squ-itten?



Emme, a purr-viously homeless tabby has 'Pay(ed) it Forward' by fostering a baby squirrel, Rocky, the Squ-itten. (photo by Jim Watkins)

Jim and his wife, Karen, started The Accidental Cattery, well ... accidentally.

"When we realized we couldn't save every cat in the world," said Karen, "we began saving those in our corner of it by providing vaccinations, emergency care and preventing future feral cat litters through TNR (trap/neuter/release). Before retiring, we had rescued and helped hundreds of cats."

One rescue, Emme, had been "adopted" by a woman who witnessed the starving, pregnant cat begging door-to-door at her apartment complex. Disregarding the "No Pets" rule, the woman "hid" the expectant mom in her apartment allowing Emme to safely give birth to her litter.

Days later, the woman saw a baby squirrel fall from a tree. Unable to return it to the tree, she gave it to Emme who judiciously welcomed the squirrel, grooming and caring for it like one of her kittens. When he'd wander away from his 'siblings', Emme would lovingly reach over and gently pull him back to her. When the woman's apartment was scheduled for an inspection, she took Emme and her "babies" to a veterinary clinic. The clinic knew of Jim and Karen's rescue group so they phoned them. Jim and Karen brought the furry family home, having no idea that their act of kindness would bring them international fame!

"We named the little grey squirrel, Rocky, after the flying squirrel in the animated 'The Rocky & Bullwinkle Show' animated television series," said Jim. "The oddest thing about Rocky is that he purred when we held him and rubbed his head. Curiously, I looked up purring on Wikipedia and discovered that rabbits, squirrels, guinea pigs, tapirs, ring-tailed lemurs, elephants, raccoons and gorillas also purr."

Initially, Emme's family was corralled in a dog kennel, until Rocky crawled out and up our walls! So, they were moved to the screened back porch, where Rocky enthusiastically and safely crawled up and down screens and brick walls.

"From Emme's expression it was obvious that she was unaccustomed to having a kitten able to perform this marvelous feat!" laughs Jim. "Soon Rocky found ways to wiggle out of the screens to climb trees, so I fixed all the holes in the rafter area. He chattered his disapproval at me, and it wasn't long before his natural instincts led him to chew his way out to freedom."

At five months of age, Rocky left to sow his wild oats, despite the steady supply of food and nuts we put out for him! Poor Emme sat on our porch pining for him. When Rocky occasionally returned for a visit, Emme was thrilled to see him.

"She'd rush over, reach out her paw and pull him to her. Seeing 'mortal enemies' displaying love for each other was moving. We learned a lot about love from Emme and Rocky," said Jim.

Whatever happened to gentle Emme?

"After her kittens were weaned and she was spayed, her kindness was "Pay(ed) Forward" by a loving a family who adopted and cares for her as she did Rocky," said Jim.

Whether Rocky considers himself a former kitten or "squi-tten" remains a mystery. Their story has gone viral into homes and hearts via the internet. "I was surprised at the response to Rocky's CNN news report," admits Jim, "It's been seen 12 million times on YouTube."

View them on CNN:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHT1nAX46dM&feature=youtube_gdata_player

Information on Jim's series of "Emme and Rocky" children's books: AccidentalCattery@att.net

TIPS: "As a child I had two red fox pups who ate with our dogs," added Jim, "but at seven months the foxes reverted to their true nature and became aggressive. I also had two cuddly Bobcat kittens, but it did not take long before they were too dangerous to have around. The goal with wild animals should always remain to release them to follow their instincts and live their lives naturally. Often, fostered wild animals' kidneys suffer because they are not fed what their bodies need, resulting in shorter, unhealthy lives." Jim urges animal lovers to adopt cats and dogs from rescue groups, "They have amazing, lovable pets available."

Write us about your fun pet at angelscribe@msn.com

Waiver extends supplemental nutrition assistance

A waiver approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) allows Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Disaster SNAP recipients in 23 counties, including Lane and Douglas counties.

Normally, SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase

"hot food products prepared for immediate consumption." This restriction is being waived following the severe winds and wildfires that led to the displacement of many residents and left them without access to a kitchen to prepare meals.

Examples of allowable prepared foods include hot

deli foods, fountain drinks, including but not limited to coffee and tea, a slice of hot/prepared pizza, hot soup, salad bars, and sandwiches.

This waiver will last through Nov. 20 and allows SNAP and DSNAP recipients to use their benefits to buy prepared food at any participating retailer that

accepts SNAP EBT cards.

Restaurant purchases are still prohibited.

For more information about the hot food waiver, visit www.oregon.gov/dhs/ASSISTANCE/FOOD-BENEFITS/Pages/DSNAP-Hot-Foods-Waiver.aspx.

PH Cottage Grove earns national honor for excellence

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove Community Medical Center was recently honored for providing outstanding patient care and

setting a high standard in clinical excellence by Premier Inc., a leading healthcare improvement company.

PeaceHealth Cottage Grove was named a finalist for the 2020 QUEST Award for High-Value Healthcare. Cottage Grove was honored

with the QUEST Award for High-Value Healthcare in 2016 and has been an award finalist for each of the past four years.

In addition to being named a finalist, Cottage Grove was recognized for achieving top performance among its Critical Access Hospital peer group in Premier's Quest 2020 collaborative. These hospitals were evaluated for mortality, readmissions, affordability and safety.

Cottage Grove also has received the Premier Supply Chain Excellence Award for the sixth straight year.

QUEST is a national quality improvement collaborative of nearly 200 hospitals within Premier, an alliance of more than 4,000 hospitals and health systems and 175,000 additional providers and organizations.

Cottage Grove was one of 24 hospitals nationwide — and the only one in Oregon — to be a finalist for the High-Value Healthcare Award, which recognizes top performance in any four of the five areas of patient care measured by the QUEST collaborative.

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