

## **Those Sensational Soups!**

“Only the pure of heart can make good soup.”

- Ludwig van Beethoven

Even if you are not a fan of great classical music, who can argue with that kind of culinary wisdom? I'm sure every one of you at one time or another has carefully lifted the lid on that simmering pot to breathe deeply the perfume of a much anticipated taste treat.

A steaming hearty bowl of soup any time but especially in the cold winter months is more than a meal when combined with really good crusty bread or your favorite flatbread or cracker. Remember those old Campbell's Soup commercials...every one of those children was smiling as mom brought them their bowls.

And look at what's happened recently in the soup section of your neighborhood grocery store. Take a moment and check out all of the new soups being released on the market...Italian Wedding Soup, Sweet Corn Chowder, Chicken Pot Pie, and on and on! People are eating more soup and loving it.

The enjoyment of soup with people gathered together to eat out of the communal pot goes back thousands of years and touches nearly every culture that has existed. Even before pots existed that could be placed over a fire there's evidence of stones being hollowed out and placed in a fire to cook water, meat and “whatever” as an early form of soup.

It is one of the perfect foods that can offer the bulk desired in a meal with assortments of meats, poultry, fish, veggies, noodles and then there's the broth. Even the smallest child can enjoy and benefit from the broth not to mention the elderly of our cultures. In past times the aged did not have the benefit of ...shall we say “dental longevity” ...and meals could only be enjoyed that required little or no chewing. Soup worked perfectly.

Then there's the use of soup for our loved ones when they're under the weather. Most families have a special soup that is as important as a trip to the doctor when a cold or flu hits. My grandmother always made us home made potato soup when we were ill. For my family its usually Chicken Matzo Ball from a wonderful old recipe I received from dear friends in Florida. And you know what...even some medical research has acknowledged that the chicken broth in some soups seems to help people fighting colds. Go figure!

I want to share a couple of the recipes we used at our restaurant, Cups & Corks, in Blanchester. They are two of the most requested and I hope you'll give them a try this winter. We'll start out with:

### **U.S. Senate Bean Soup**

*This recipe with slight modifications is also served in the cafeteria for the U.S. House of Representatives, but the version we've always used is from the Senate side of Congress.*

*History has it that U.S. Speaker of the House, Joseph Cannon (1903-1911), had a hissy fit one day in the cafeteria and demanded that Bean Soup be available on the menu every day...thus began a tradition.*

*Also, some of the great fans of this soup include Senator Bob Dole, former President Gerald Ford, the late Representative Sonny Bono and Senator Everett Dirksen, who even wrote a Homage to Beans three years before his death in 1966.*

You will need:

1 pound dry white beans, soaked overnight (or quick soaked)  
1 meaty ham bone or 2 smoked ham hocks  
3 quarts water  
3 onions, finely chopped  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
4 stalks celery, with leaves, finely chopped  
¼ cup parsley, finely chopped  
1 cup cooked mashed potatoes  
salt & pepper to taste  
garnish with minced parsley or chives

Strain water from the soaked beans and place beans in a heavy soup pot with 3 quarts of water and the ham bone or hocks. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 2 hours.

Stir the chopped vegetables and herbs into the pot along with the mashed potatoes and cook over low heat for one more hour until the beans are nicely tender. Remove the bones from the pot and cut off the meat into small bits to be returned to the pot. Discard the bones or spoil your doggy with them. When serving sprinkle with a pinch of parsley or chives.

(You may note that this is a bean soup that has had no baking soda or “Beano” added to counter the after effects of the beans. I can only imagine that this is significant in that it is being served to our legislators and they need all of the “hot air” they can get to make it through their days.)

The next recipe is one given to me by Ed, hence the name:

### **Ed’s Spicy Veggie Turkey Soup**

In a large soup pot add:

¾ head of cabbage, sliced and chopped  
2 medium turnips, peeled and diced  
1 ½ cups sliced baby carrots  
1 lb. frozen or fresh sweet corn  
2 medium potatoes, peeled and diced

1 green pepper, diced  
2 cloves minced garlic  
1 pound browned ground turkey  
1 quart canned tomatoes  
2 medium onions, sliced and diced  
2 stalks of celery, chopped fine  
1 tablespoon red pepper  
1 tablespoon sea salt  
1 teaspoon ground black pepper

Add water until you have correct consistency in the pot, put on medium heat and bring to slow boil, reduce heat to simmer and cook 2 hours. After cooking, taste and adjust spice level with gradual addition of hot salsa a little at a time...be careful! Don't worry about making a large batch as the soup will improve the next day and once your neighbors taste it they'll be bugging you for some to take home. Mangia!

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My wine find this week is a perfect recommendation for those of you who love a big, robust red wine. For over two hundred years, one area of France's Rhone Valley has been the source of the red wine selected by the Vatican as their official red wine. This wine is called Chateauneuf-du-Pape and each bottle of the wine has the Pope's official seal incorporated right into the glass above the label.

The 1998 Louis Bernard Chateauneuf-du-Pape has extraordinary complexity with flavors of exotic cassis, red berries, smoky mocha and chocolate and a hint of toasted oak. There is a bright intensity in its styling and the bouquet is full of prunes, coffee, cream and spiced cedarwood. This wine is a blockbuster and one of the top red wine picks we've found in the last couple of years. It received a 92 rating by the Wine Spectator.

This particular CdP is made from a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvedre grapes and will compliment spicy dishes, large game, lamb, grilled red meats and a variety of assertive cheeses. Please let us know if you need assistance finding this great selection at (888) 288-0668.