

# Scrumptious soups

There's nothing as comforting as a bowl of soup. In the winter, it is warm and filling, and in the summer, chilled fruit soups go great with salads and grilled dishes. Food historians tell us the history of soup is as old as the history of cooking. The word soup comes from the same source as the English term "sop," meaning a piece of bread soaked in liquid. Indeed the modern restaurant industry is said to be based on soup. The word restaurant was first used in France in the 16th century, to describe a highly concentrated, inexpensive soup, sold by street vendors called restaurer. In 1765, a Parisian entrepreneur opened a shop specializing in restaurers, which over time through common use brought us to the modern day word restaurant.

by Marwa Selim



Soup is also good for you. Even today, with all the debates going on about right and wrong food, nobody doubts the benefits of soup. Hot soup in particular has numerous health benefits. Unlike what happens during stewing and frying, vegetables, mushrooms, meat and poultry cooked directly in soups conserve much more of their natural nutrients, vitamins and general essence. And despite the fact that soup usually contains a lot less calories than the main dish, it isn't any less nutritious or filling; a great bonus!

Soups are classified into two broad groups: clear soups and thick soups. Clear soups tend to be lighter than thick soups, and are really good starters. Thick soups are yummy and very filling, and with a few additions, can turn into a main dish. They're perfect for busy days when you're too tired to cook, and great if you have leftovers. We've included two soup recipes for you to try, the traditional chicken soup and my creamy any-vegetable-works soup that's a guaranteed winner and super easy to make:

Marwa Selim, Dubai based mum of two, writes a monthly column for ExpatWoman.com Foodies section.



## Chicken Soup

Chicken bones (or a whole chicken if you want meat in your soup)  
Enough water to cover the bones/chicken  
1 carrot  
1 celery stalk  
1 bay leaf  
A few cardamom pods and arabic gum  
Dried thyme and fresh parsley



1. In a large stockpot, combine the bones/chicken with the water and bring to a boil, skimming off the scum that rises to the surface.
2. Simmer the mixture for 20 minutes, skimming, and add remaining ingredients. Simmer for 2 to 3 hours and strain.
3. Discard the fat that rises to the surface (the best way to remove the fat is to chill the stock overnight. The fat will harden on top which makes it easy to scoop off).
4. Return the stock to the cleaned stockpot and simmer until it is reduced by half. Add salt to taste. Add the cooked chicken if using.

## Any-Vegetable-Works Soup

2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 chopped onion  
2 medium carrots cut into chunks  
1 medium zucchini cut into chunks  
1 small potato cut into small pieces  
1 celery stalk  
1 bay leaf  
A few cardamom pods and arabic gum  
Dried thyme and fresh parsley  
Enough stock to cover vegetables

1. In a large stockpot, heat oil and sauté onion.
2. Add carrots, zucchini, and potato and stir for a 2 minutes.
3. Add stock, celery, bay leaf, cardamom, and arabic gum.
4. Bring to boil, and then simmer for about 30 minutes until vegetables are tender.
5. Remove celery, bay leaf, cardamom, and arabic gum, and then puree the soup.
6. Serve immediately or heat up when you need it.

You can substitute any vegetable you like, squash works very well in this soup, and it freezes very well. Give it a try! Bon appétit.

