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Classic Split Green Pea Soup

Makes about 2-1/2 Qt/2.5 L – Serves 4 to 6

Filling and comforting, this soup is one of Chef Aniceto's favorites to both make and eat. He prepares it at home during winter and eats it out of a coffee mug as a quick meal after a long, busy workday. When he makes it for us at Flour, I do the same, enjoying it for lunch, midday snack, or early dinner. It's thick and satisfying and full of flavor.

3 tbsp vegetable oil
1 medium onion, cut into 1/2-in/12-mm pieces
1 large carrot, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
1 large leek, white and tender green parts, well rinsed and cut into 1-in/2.5-cm pieces
2 garlic cloves, smashed and minced
1 tsp finely chopped fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
1 to 1-1/2 lb/455 to 680 g smoked ham hock or shank
(shanks are meatier than hocks)
2 qt/2 L Vegetable Stock (see below)
1-1/2 cups/300 g green split peas, rinsed
1 small russet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-in/12-mm pieces
2 tsp Dijon mustard
2 tsp whole-grain mustard
1 tsp kosher salt
1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
2 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice
3 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Special Equipment: large stockpot, blender or food processor

1. In the stockpot, heat the vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Add the onion, carrot, leek, and garlic; reduce the heat to medium-low; and sweat the vegetables, stirring often with a wooden spoon, for 6 to 8 minutes, or until they soften and the onion turns translucent. Add the thyme, bay leaf, and ham hock; then pour in the stock, raise the heat to medium-high, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring occasionally, for about 1-1/2 hours.

2. Stir in the split peas, potato, and about 2 cups/480 ml water. Simmer over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, for another 1 to 1-1/2 hours, or until the peas are tender.

3. When the peas have softened, fish out the bay leaf and discard. Carefully fish out the ham hock and set it aside until it is cool enough to handle. Remove the meat from the bone, chop the meat, and set it aside.

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4. Add the Dijon and whole grain mustards, salt, and pepper to the soup and stir well. In the blender or food processor, purée about half of the soup until smooth and return it to the pot. Add the reserved ham, lemon juice, and parsley and stir well. If the soup seems too thick, add up to 1/2 cup/120 ml water to thin as needed, then taste and adjust the seasoning if needed. Bring the soup back to a simmer and turn off the heat.

5. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve immediately. The soup can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 3 days or in the freezer for up to 1 month.

Vegetable Stock

Makes about 2 Qt/ 2 L

1 medium onion
1 large carrot
2 celery stalks
1/2 tsp. fennel seeds
1/2 tsp. coriander seeds
1 bay leaf

Special Equipment: large stockpot, sieve

1. Roughly chop the onion, carrot, and celery into pieces 1 in/2.5 cm thick. In the stockpot, combine the chopped vegetables, the fennel, coriander, bay leaf, and about 2-1/2 qt/2.4 L water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer and simmer for about 10 minutes. Turn off heat and let the stock sit for 30 minutes.

2. Strain the stock through the sieve into a large container and discard the solids. The stock can be stored in an airtight container in the fridge for 1 week or in the freezer for up to 3 weeks.