

Chefs Offer Their Soup-Making Tips

By Channaly Philipp | Epoch Times Staff

Jenny Dorsey, chef and culinary consultant

Use good ingredients and cook those ingredients appropriately. For instance, don't over-cook greens in a soup or boil the broccoli for an hour. I also think people over-rely on butter and cream to make soups thick and "creamy." You can achieve that consistency with squash, for instance.

I think a common misconception is that soup has to be cooked forever and ever for great flavor. Usually it does take a while for the flavors to marinate, but at some point everything begins to disintegrate too. Also, use homemade stock as a starting stock and salt as you cook the soup. Homemade stock is key, as is flavoring as you go.



Culinary consultant Jenny Dorsey says she uses fish sauce to boost the flavor of soups.

NANETTE WONG

Timothy Dugan, executive chef, Restaurant Bornholm, Brooklyn

I add all the stems from the herbs I will use, in the beginning. Remove them when the soup is almost done, then add the picked herbs at the end, giving it a nice bright flavor.

A common mistake is adding salt at the start of the soup. As the soup reduces, it becomes more salty. There's an easy fix for it, though: Just add some potatoes. The starch will suck up the salt and things will even out.

I think most chefs agree that using homemade stock makes a world of difference. Store-bought stock often has a sickening amount of sodium.

Michael Lee, executive chef, Centrale Italian Kitchen & Bar, Yorktown Heights, NY

You must season throughout the cooking process in an effort to extract all flavors and incorporate along the way. Never season only at the end.

Matthew Robinson, food scientist, chef, and author of "Knickerbocker Glory: A Chef's Guide to Innovation in the Kitchen and Beyond"

The big difference between a good soup and a great soup is the stock. A homemade stock will be a better foundation than anything store bought. Other secret ingredients are those that add a bit of umami—Worcestershire sauce, mushroom, cured meat, spinach, or celery. The addition of fresh herbs just before serving is a great trick to add flavor.

Ken Immer, president and chief culinary officer, Culinary Health Solutions

You might imagine that my first suggestion of a "secret" ingredient would be a well-made stock. Honestly, it's almost a requirement when we are talking about 99 percent of cooked soups. Once we do have a great stock to build a soup upon, there are a few ingredients that I think are key to really making a soup "pop."

A shot of an acid (lemon or lime juice, vinegar, wine) at the end of cooking can really perk up a soup that may have been overcooked in order to get all the beans or meat to really be tender.

Fresh herbs are also best added both at the beginning and the end of the soup. If you're using fresh herbs, even if the recipe only says at the beginning or at the end, be sure to do both. Umeshoshi plum paste. This is a bit of an

obscure ingredient, but you'll be happy to note that Whole Foods, or almost any healthy grocery store, carries it these days. This ingredient has a very complex flavor profile that includes all the tastes: salty, sour, sweet, bitter, and that flavor we call umami that is almost magic. [It's] especially important in vegan soups, [in] which it can be hard to develop richness.

Bones of the animal. Using a bone-in piece of the meat that you are making the soup out of (or simply adding them while the soup is simmering and then removing before serving) is a great way of adding even more flavor and can be great when stock is just not available.

Soy sauce. It isn't only for Asian-style soups! Any soup that calls for red wine and/or tomato paste and is a "dark-colored" soup can benefit from a splash of soy sauce added at the beginning of the process along with that red wine or tomato paste.

Caryn O'Sullivan, health and nutrition coach, author of "Soups! By the Season"

As a nutrition coach, I believe soup is the gateway to health. Soup is the opportunity for mega-nutrition packed into a simple to digest and soothing meal.

For bean-based soups, add kombu to make the beans more digestible and reduce the gassy effect of beans, as well as add a boost of iodine and other essential minerals to the soup.

Adding one or two potatoes to a traditionally creamy soup, like cauliflower soup, will add a creamy element, so you can omit the dairy. Simply blend up and serve. The potatoes will add a boost of lysine as well, an amino acid that helps to fight viral infections and boost immunity.

When making broth, add in fresh herbs like thyme, rosemary, and oregano to pump up the nutritional value and add a subtle herbaceous background.

Coconut milk creates a delectable soup without the added dairy and complements sweet vegetables like sweet potato, squash, and potato, as well as curry-based soups.

For me, it is essential to use a broth that is well-flavored and not overpowering, especially when looking for a vegetable broth.



Recipe from Patsy's Italian Restaurant. Our only location 236 W. 56th St. 212-247-3491 www.patsys.com

PASTA FAGIOLI

Makes 6 servings

Italian cooks know how to stretch their money. I was told that this wonderful bean and macaroni soup uses short pasta because the broken bits of the long varieties were sold at bargain prices. Everyone knows this by its name in Neapolitan dialect, pronounced "pasta faz-ool." Years ago, a couple of regular customers returned from a trip to Italy and were excited to tell us about a great soup they had eaten called "pahs-tah fah-gee-oh-lee," which is the textbook pronunciation. Nobody knew what the heck they were talking about until we wrote it down on paper.

- 8 ounces small pasta shells or any small pasta for soup
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup coarsely chopped yellow onions
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 3 cups tomato sauce
- 2 cups chicken stock or reduced-sodium chicken broth
- One 15-ounce can cannellini (white kidney) beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Bring a large saucepan of salted water

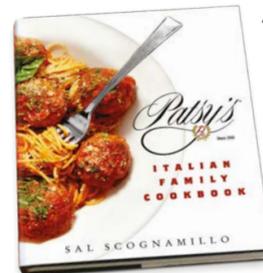
to a boil over high heat. Add the shells and cook according to the package directions until tender. Drain and set aside.

2. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly browned, about 4 minutes.

3. Stir in the tomato sauce, stock, and beans and bring to a boil. Reduce heat the heat to medium-low and cover. Simmer to blend the flavors, about 4 minutes.

4. Stir in the cooked pasta and parsley and cook just until the pasta is heated through, about 2 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot.

This recipe can be found on page 34 of my new cookbook "Patsy's Italian Family Cookbook."



A big, warm, beautiful Italian cookbook with full color throughout, Patsy's Italian Family Cookbook is a great book for those who know the restaurant and love classic Italian dishes.

RECIPE

HOT AND SOUR SOUP

Servings: 4

"The most delicious soup that I've ever had is our own Hot and Sour soup that we serve at La Thai," said Diana Chauvin Gallé, the executive chef and owner of La Thai in New Orleans. "It's my mom's recipe. I've been eating it since I was 7 years old, and it's still my absolute favorite."

Her mother, Punnee, affectionately known to all as Mama, introduced Thai food to the New Orleans dining scene in the 1970s, when she moved there from Bangkok.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup hot bean sauce
- 4 cups chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon shaoxing jiu (Chinese rice wine)
- 1/4 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground white pepper
- Pinch of salt
- 1 chicken breast, steamed then chopped into small pieces (fat included)
- 1/4 pound silken tofu, julienned
- 1/2 cup drained canned bamboo shoots, julienned
- 1/2 ounce dried wood ear mushrooms (about 2 medium or 1 large), soaked in water for 1 hour, rinsed and julienned
- 6 small dried shiitake mushrooms,



soaked in water for 30 minutes, julienned

- 2 table-spoons cornstarch
- 2 to 3 table-spoons chinkiang vinegar (Chinese black rice vinegar)

- 6 sprigs cilantro, for garnish
- 1/2 scallion, finely chopped, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Heat a large, flat-bottomed wok over high until hot. Add oil, then bean sauce, and cook until fragrant, about 5 seconds.

Add stock, wine, sugar, pepper, and salt. Bring to a boil.

Add chicken, tofu, bamboo shoots, and mushrooms, and bring back to a boil.

Reduce heat to low. Cover, and simmer for 3 minutes.

In a bowl, stir cornstarch together with 3 tablespoons water. Uncover wok and return soup to a boil. Stirring constantly, add in the cornstarch mixture and cook until thickened, about 1 minute.

Reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes. Take off heat and stir in the vinegar. Ladle soup into 4 bowls. Garnish with cilantro and scallions.

Recipe courtesy of Diana Chauvin Gallé, owner and executive chef at La Thai, New Orleans



We, at Hatsuhana, realize that it is rare to find a "no gimmicks, no frills" approach to sushi. Sushi is a conceptually simple cuisine. Ironically, its simplicity also makes it complicated. Hatsuhana salutes the centuries-old methods used by prominent sushi restaurants and chefs in Japan. PHOTOS: EDWARD DAI

Obsessive Attention to Detail

The single inspiration that led to the establishment of Hatsuhana was nothing more than the desire to introduce unsurpassed sushi and sashimi to New Yorkers. Since the first day we opened our doors in 1976, we have been a sushi specialty restaurant. This has helped us maintain our focus exclusively on sushi cuisine.

Nearly four decades later, our mission remains unchanged. Obsessive attention to detail should be the norm for sushi restaurants, not something to strive for. The complexity associated with creating the ideal sushi rice. The fragrance of freshly ground wasabi. The freshest fish from around the globe.

Please come by for lunch or dinner and let us show you what real sushi is like!

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