

Chef Debrina Woods NOTES: 50 Simple Soups

1. **The Basic Chicken:** Chop 1 onion, 1 celery stalk, 2 carrots and 1 tablespoon thyme; sauté in butter until tender. Season with salt and pepper. Add 6 cups chicken broth; simmer 20 minutes. Add 2 cups shredded cooked chicken, 1/3 cup mixed chopped dill and parsley, and some lemon juice.
2. **Chicken Rice** Make Basic Chicken Soup (No. 1); omit dill and add chives, chervil and tarragon. Stir in 1/3 cup cooked basmati rice. (add frozen peas once off heat)
3. **Italian Wedding** Make Basic Chicken Soup (No. 1) with a rind of parmesan in the broth. Add 1 pound mini meatballs, 1 cup orzo and 3 cups torn escarole; simmer until the orzo is tender.
4. **Chicken Dumpling** Mix 2 tablespoons softened butter, 1 beaten egg, 1/2 cup farina cereal and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Drop half-teaspoonfuls into simmering chicken broth; cook for 3 minutes after the dumplings float.
5. **Escarole and White Bean** Cook 3 chopped garlic cloves and some red pepper flakes in olive oil. Add 3 cups chicken broth, 1 head chopped escarole and a parmesan rind; simmer 15 minutes. Add 1 can white beans, parmesan and salt.
6. **Butternut Squash** Sauté 1/2 sliced onion with a pinch of thyme in butter until soft. Add salt, pepper, 2 pounds diced butternut squash and 5 cups chicken broth. Simmer until tender, then puree.
7. **Squash and Sage** Make Butternut Squash Soup (No. 6) using 2 shallots instead of onion. Fry sage leaves in the butter. Replace 1 1/2 cups of the broth with apple cider; add nutmeg. Top with crème fraiche and the fried sage.
8. **Parsnip-Bacon** Make Butternut Squash Soup (No. 6); substitute 2 pounds parsnips for the squash. Top with crumbled bacon and crème fraiche.
9. **Asian Chicken** Puree 2 garlic cloves with a 2-inch piece peeled ginger; fry in oil with 1 bunch sliced scallions. Add 3 cups each chicken broth and water, 1 tablespoon each soy sauce and sherry, and a pinch of sugar; boil. Add shredded cooked chicken, sliced carrots and snow peas; drizzle with sesame oil.
10. **Spicy Dumpling** Make Asian Chicken Soup (No. 9); add frozen dumplings instead of chicken. Top with Asian chili sauce.
11. **Spicy Tortilla** Puree 2 seeded, soaked ancho chiles, 1 onion, 2 tomatoes and 2 garlic cloves; fry in oil. Add 6 cups chicken broth, 4 torn corn tortillas, some shredded cooked chicken and 1/2 cup cilantro; simmer until thick. Add salt; garnish with crisp tortilla strips, Mexican cheese, avocado, cilantro and lime juice.
12. **Stracciatella** Beat 2 eggs with 1/3 cup grated parmesan. Drizzle into 6 cups simmering chicken broth; cook 2 minutes.

13. **Egg Drop** Cook 1 tablespoon chopped ginger and 3 chopped scallions in sesame oil. Add 6 cups chicken broth and 2 tablespoons each soy sauce and sherry; bring to a simmer. Slowly pour in 2 beaten eggs and cook 2 minutes.

14. **Sausage-Bean** Make Escarole and White Bean Soup (No. 5); sauté 4 chopped sweet Italian sausages with the garlic.

15. **Egg-Lemon** Cook 1/2 cup pastina in 6 cups simmering chicken broth with 3 tablespoons lemon juice. Beat 2 eggs, 2 yolks and 3 tablespoons lemon juice; whisk in a little hot broth, then stir the mixture into the soup. Cook over low heat until thick.

16. **Potato Chowder** Sauté 4 ounces chopped bacon; add 2 tablespoons butter, 2 sliced leeks and 2 teaspoons each sage and thyme. Add 4 cups chicken broth, 1 1/2 cups cream, a bay leaf and 3 chopped potatoes. Simmer until tender; top with chives.

17. **Potato Cheese** Make Potato Chowder (No. 16); stir in 8 ounces grated sharp cheddar.

18. **Clam Chowder** Make Potato Chowder (No. 16); omit sage and use 2 cups each clam juice and water in place of broth. Season with cayenne. Add 2 cups clams during the last 5 minutes of cooking.

19. **Corn Chowder** Make Potato Chowder (No. 16); omit sage. Stir in 2 cups corn during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Garnish with diced roasted red peppers.

20. **Minestrone Chop** 3 garlic cloves, 1 carrot, 1 onion, 1 celery stalk and 1/4 head cabbage; sauté in oil. Add 1 can each white beans and diced tomatoes, 4 cups chicken broth and a parmesan rind; simmer 20 minutes. Add 1 cup ditalini pasta and simmer until tender. Add salt and pepper.

21. **Fish Chowder** Make Potato Chowder (No. 16) with just 2 ounces bacon. Omit sage; swap the cream with half-and-half. Add 1 pound white fish chunks and 1/2 pound flaked smoked trout during the last 5 minutes of cooking.

22. **Pistou** Make Minestrone (No. 20); add 1 sliced zucchini and 1 cup diced butternut squash with the vegetables. Swirl in pesto.

23. **Tortellini** Make Minestrone (No. 20); substitute 1 cup tortellini for the ditalini.

24. **Sweet Potato** Sweat 2 chopped onions, 4 chopped garlic cloves, 3 peeled and cubed sweet potatoes, and 1 teaspoon coriander in olive oil. Simmer with 6 cups chicken broth until soft. Puree; top with salsa.

25. **Curried Sweet Potato** Make Sweet Potato Soup (No. 24); use butter instead of oil and add 1 tablespoon curry powder with the potatoes. Top with chutney.

26. **Curried Red Lentil** Cook 3 chopped garlic cloves, 1 each chopped onion and carrot, 1/2 tablespoon chopped ginger and a pinch of cayenne in oil. Add 6 cups water, 1 can coconut milk, 1 cup red lentils and 1/2 cup rice; simmer 20 minutes. Garnish with lime, cilantro and scallions.

27. **Split Pea** Simmer 1/2 pound split peas with 1 each chopped celery stalk, onion and carrot, a ham hock and a bundle of fresh herbs in 5 cups water until tender. Remove ham and bone; pull off the meat. Puree the soup; stir in ham.

28. **Vegetarian Pea** Make Split Pea Soup (No. 27); omit the ham hock. Puree just half of the soup and mix it back in; add 1 cup diced carrot. Top with croutons.

29. **Cheddar-Horseradish** Sweat 2 each diced carrots and leeks in butter. Add cayenne, salt, 3 tablespoons flour and 2 tablespoons dry mustard; cook 2 minutes. Add 1 bottle beer, 1/4 cup horseradish, 3 cups water and a dash of Worcestershire; simmer until thick. Whisk in 2 cups half-and-half and 1 1/2 cups cheddar.

30. **French Onion** Cook 4 sliced onions and 2 thyme sprigs in butter, covered, 20 minutes. Uncover; cook 1 hour, or until caramelized, stirring occasionally. Add 6 cups beef broth; simmer 10 minutes. Add cognac, salt and pepper. Top with gruyere toasts.

31. **Tomato Alphabet** Boil 3 cups chicken broth, 2 cups tomato juice and a pinch of dried oregano. Add 1/2 cup alphabet pasta, and season with salt and pepper. Cook until tender. Stir in grated parmesan.

32. **Tomato Orzo** Make Tomato Alphabet Soup (No. 31) with orzo instead of alphabet pasta. Omit parmesan; top with feta and dill.

33. **Carrot-Ginger** Sweat 2 sliced shallots and 3 tablespoons minced ginger in butter; season with salt and pepper. Add 1 pound sliced carrots, 2 tablespoons rice, 2 cups chicken broth and 3 cups water. Simmer until the rice is tender, then puree.

34. **Carrot-Dill** Make Carrot-Ginger Soup (No. 33); omit the ginger and add chopped dill. Garnish with sour cream.

35. **Pappa al Pomodoro** Sauté 1 chopped onion in oil until tender; add 3 chopped garlic cloves, some red pepper flakes, 1 large can chopped tomatoes, 1 cup water and a basil sprig. Add 2 cups stale bread cubes; simmer 20 minutes.

36. **Thai Coconut** Sauté 3 sliced garlic cloves, 3 tablespoons grated ginger, 1/4 cup chopped lemongrass, 1 teaspoon each cumin and coriander, and a Thai chile in oil. Add 1 sliced raw chicken breast and 1 sliced onion; cook 5 minutes. Add shredded bok choy, 4 cups water, 1 can coconut milk, cilantro and 2 tablespoons fish sauce; simmer 8 minutes.

37. **Black Bean** Soak 1/2 pound dried black beans overnight; drain. Sauté 1 each chopped celery stalk, onion and carrot and 2 smashed garlic cloves in oil. Add beans, thyme, a bay leaf, a ham hock and 5 cups water; simmer 40 minutes. Remove ham and bone; pull off the meat. Puree the soup; stir in the ham.

38. **Mexican Bean** Make Black Bean Soup (No. 37); omit thyme and add 1 teaspoon each chipotle chili powder and cumin. Puree just half of the soup and mix it back in. Mix in the juice of 1 lime; top with sour cream, cilantro and salsa.

39. **Curried Cauliflower** Cook 4 sliced leeks with 1 tablespoon curry powder in butter. Add 1 head chopped cauliflower and 1 garlic clove; cook 5 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add 5 cups chicken broth; boil until soft, then puree. Simmer with 1 cup cream.

40. **Thai Shrimp** Make Thai Coconut Soup (No. 36); omit the chicken and add 1/2 pound peeled small shrimp during the last 5 minutes of cooking

41. **Potato-Leek** Sauté 3 cups each sliced leeks and cubed potatoes in butter. Add 1 sliced garlic clove and a pinch each salt, pepper, thyme and nutmeg; cook 5 minutes. Add 5 cups chicken broth; boil until potatoes are tender, then puree. Reheat with 1 cup cream.

42. **Beef Borscht** Sweat 1/2 head chopped cabbage and 2 each chopped celery stalks, leeks, carrots and parsnips in oil. Add thyme, 1 tablespoon tomato paste, a bay leaf and 10 cups beef broth; simmer 30 minutes. Add 4 diced roasted beets and 2 cups shredded cooked beef; simmer 15 minutes. Top with sour cream and dill.

43. **Potato Broccoli** Make Potato-Leek Soup (No. 41); add 3 cups broccoli and simmer 5 minutes before pureeing.

44. **Vichyssoise** Make Potato-Leek Soup (No. 41) with water instead of broth. Strain after pureeing, then chill. Omit the cream; stir in half-and-half and top with chives.

45. **Watercress** Make Potato-Leek Soup (No. 41); add 2 bunches chopped watercress and simmer 3 minutes, then puree until smooth.

46. **Garlic Broth** Sweat 2 heads garlic (smashed and peeled) in olive oil. Add 8 cups chicken broth and a bundle of fresh herbs; simmer 40 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

47. **Garlic-Chorizo** Make Garlic Broth (No. 46); add 1/4 pound sliced chorizo during the last 10 minutes. Add chopped spinach.

48. **Garlicky Broccoli Rabe** Make Garlic Broth (No. 46); add chopped broccoli rabe and small pasta during the last 10 minutes. Top with grated parmesan.

49. **Tomato-Lime** Make Garlic Broth (No. 46); add 3 chopped plum tomatoes during the last 3 minutes. Stir in lime juice and chopped cilantro.

50. **Peas and Pesto** Make Garlic Broth (No. 46); add 1 cup frozen peas during the last 5 minutes. Stir in pesto and grated parmesan.