

Basic Bean Soup

I keep a bucket of mixed beans (minus black beans, since they color everything black, and no lentils, peas, and garbanzos as they vary how long to cook things). I make different bean soups out of the same mix of beans. Here is how to make unique bean soups any time! Soak the beans as per the soaking method described under how to cook beans (either overnight or by quick soak). Next, put them in a stock pot, with chicken, beef, or vegetable soup stock, or water mixed with onion soup mix. I usually add coarsely chopped onions, garlic, and a few bay leaves to the soup, no matter what variation I am making. Depending on what flavor you are shooting for (Italian, Mexican, Indian, etc.) add a blend of spices, once the beans are nearly done cooking, to taste. Add vegetables of your choice (such as a can of crushed tomatoes, bell peppers, hot peppers, corn, carrots, shredded cabbage, etc.), and some small pasta (such as orzo, alphabets, stars or small shells). Simmer until vegetables are crisp tender and pasta is done.

If your family is just getting used to bean soup and other such oddities J then it may be helpful to add some cooked meat to the soup, less the amount of beans in the soup, keep "weird vegetables" to a minimum, and of course, always serve with a hearty loaf of bread!

In a frying pan, brown 2-3 large sliced onions in 2T of olive oil, and add 2T of caraway seeds to it. Slowly, in batches, brown about 2 lbs of stewing beef (or cubed round steak, chuck roast, or other beef cut into cubes), and when browned, put in a crock pot or leave to simmer on the stove. Add about 3-4 lbs of diced potatoes, and a few diced carrots, 4 cloves of garlic, about 2T of tomato paste, and 2T of paprika, and 1T of curry powder (season this to taste if you do not like it hot ;)). Pour on about 4 qts of beef stock or water plus onion soup mix. Simmer all day.