

## Soup For All Seasons

Growing up in such a large family, my 12 siblings and I became used to some good-natured ribbing from friends at an early age. We learned how to give it back, too. One of the most frequently asked questions was how my mother fed such a large brood. I would launch into my tall tale of the two 55 gallon galvanized trash cans my mother would put on the stove to cook the spaghetti sauce and pasta- stirring with broom handles, of course. I would then explain how my dad would rinse out the trash cans with the garden hose after dinner to get them ready for tomorrow's oatmeal breakfast.



Reality was of course a bit more mundane than that. Thanks to my parents' frugality and fresh, healthy vegetables from our family garden, supplemented with bulk purchases from the farmers' market, we always had bountiful, nutritious meals. Soup was a mainstay then, with Dad raiding the refrigerator every Saturday to make his famous "Kitchen Sink Soup" while Mom took refuge at the local mall. He would start with a base of whatever Campbell's soup was in the pantry and add any leftovers that had accumulated during the week. Mom would come home refreshed after a day of shopping, the kitchen would be clean, and a delicious soup would be simmering on the stove.

That frugality extends to our soup-making today, as a look at our freezer would attest. There we save the bones of meals past, from chicken and turkey carcasses to beef, lamb and pork bones, ready to be simmered for hours as the base for delicious soups and stews. We save vegetable trimmings too: woody mushroom stems, celery tops, fennel fronds and overgrown summer squash make delicious, healthful stock when partnered with sautéed fresh aromatics such as onions, carrots and celery.

Here is one of our favorite autumn soups, perfect for leftover Thanksgiving turkey. A very Happy Thanksgiving to Rowena, Ron and all of my readers, with much gratitude for a terrific year!

### **Black Bean Soup with Turkey and Chorizo**

- 1 ½ cup peeled and cubed butternut squash***
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and cut into coins***
- 1 cup diced celery***
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped (about 2 cups)***
- ½ cup seeded and diced hot chiles such as Serrano or jalapeno (to your taste)***
- 1 cup seeded and diced sweet peppers***
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced***
- ¼ cup olive oil***
- 4 cups chopped fresh tomatoes or (1) 28 ounce can of whole peeled tomatoes, with juices***
- 2 cups frozen corn***
- (2) 15 ounce cans black beans, drained***
- 3 cups cooked turkey meat, cut into bite-sized pieces***
- 6 ounces smoked chorizo, cut into bite-sized pieces (or 6 ounces fresh chorizo, crumbled)***
- (1) 28 ounce can crushed tomatoes***
- 12 cups chicken or turkey broth, preferably homemade***
- 2 teaspoons chipotle flakes (or to taste)***

**2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley**  
**1 heaping tablespoon ground cumin**  
**1 tablespoon dried oregano**  
**1 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped (save half for garnish)**  
**A handful of tortilla chips, to thicken soup**  
**Salt and pepper to taste**

**Soup Toppings:**

**Grated Monterey Jack Cheese, fresh chopped cilantro, salsa, cubed avocado, chopped fresh chiles of choice, sour cream**

In a large, heavy stockpot, sauté squash, carrots, celery, onion, peppers and garlic in olive oil until beginning to brown. Saute in batches to avoid overcrowding pot, removing browned vegetables to a heatproof bowl and adding more olive oil as necessary.

When these vegetables have all been browned, add them back to the pot along with the 4 cups of fresh chopped tomatoes. The tomatoes will help deglaze the browned bits in the pan. If using canned whole peeled tomatoes instead of fresh, cut the peeled tomatoes into quarters and add the juices as well. Stir the pot well to deglaze and add all the remaining ingredients, holding back half the chopped cilantro for garnish. Crush the tortilla chips in your hands and add to the pot to thicken and flavor the stock.

Bring soup to a boil and skim off any foam that develops. Reduce heat and let simmer, stirring occasionally, for an hour, until the vegetables are tender. Season to taste and serve in deep bowls with the above garnishes.