

Have a Bowl of Chicken Soup and Call me in the Morning

by John Rizzo

If you're interested in knowing when soup originated; you more than likely need to look at the history of cooking itself or at least when a container became available to cook in. Soups were as effortless as combining a variety of ingredients to create a simple, yet filling meal. Because soups are easily digested, they were always considered a food for the weak and ill often prescribed by physicians in early times. Could your mother have been right about the whole chicken noodle soup phenomena?

The word "soup" was derived from the French word *soupe* and later the English interpretation "sop". A broth was served and poured over bread or toast which soaked up the liquid and was eaten by – yes, sopping it up. And the bread took the place of a utensil. I'm not so sure that Emily Post would approve of this but I don't think they would have cared. This was often eaten as a lighter meal at the end of the day which eventually led to the word "supper".

Restaurants as we know them originated from serving soup. The French in the 16th Century coined the term "restaurer" as a highly concentrated, yet inexpensive soup that was sold by street vendors. In Paris, in 1765, the first shop that specialized in restaurers opened; and the term restaurant evolved to describe this type of business.

With the invention of canning in the 1800's, came the birth of commercial soup. In 1897 the Campbell Soup Company invented condensed soup in a can. Campbell's top 3 selling products alone are responsible for 2.5 billion bowls of soup consumed each year. Who said that soup isn't good food?

Pasta Fagioli

Yield: 3 quarts

Onion, Diced	1.25 Cups	Garlic, Minced	1 TBL
Celery Diced	1.5 Cups	Parsley	1 TBL
Carrots*, Diced	1.5 Cups	Oregano	2 tsp.
Olive Oil	2 TBL	Basil	1 tsp.
Chicken Broth	4 Cups	Cannelloni Beans	3 (15 oz.) cans
Uncooked Pasta	2 Cups	Tomatoes/juice	1-28 oz. can
Black Pepper	1 tsp.	Diced Tomatoes	1-28 oz. can
Sugar to taste		<i>* optional</i>	

In a large saucepan, sauté the onions, celery, carrots, and garlic until soft; add the black pepper, oregano and basil; sauté for one additional minute. (Sautéing your spices will bring out additional flavors). Add the chicken stock, diced tomatoes and crushed tomatoes. Let the mixture simmer for approximately one hour. Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a separate pan of water; afterwards rinse with cold water so the pasta doesn't continue to cook.

After the soup simmers for an hour, add the canned beans along with their liquid. Let the soup continue to cook for about 20 minutes. At this time, season the soup with sugar, if needed, salt and the parsley. (If you cook the parsley too long, it will lose its color.) Remove from heat and add the cooked pasta (elbows, ditalini, etc.).

Pasta Fagioli ingredients can vary to your own tastes. I like to use the carrots for both its natural sugars to cut the acid in the tomatoes and to make the soup hearty. Many of these quantities can be adjusted to your own desire. A big bowl of pasta fagioli and a crusty Italian roll; now that's a meal!