

Heart Warming Gypsy Soup

By: Paul Born

In the heart of winter I often feel cold inside and out. Yes I am standing up to counted; I am one of those people who never quite understood the appeal of winter. Maybe it is the fact I grew up in British Columbia where snow and cold were seldom and never stayed long.

So now, as an adopted Ontarian, I need to find strategies for getting over winter. My favourite is to gather my friends and cook up a wonderful warming meal. The good food and conversation heat my inner being, making me believe that all is well in the world (despite it being minus 15 degrees outside).

Here is a new favourite for me and my friends. Yup! It is vegetarian. The Born Epp household is trying to do our part to get healthy and use less of the world's resources. It is also so simple to make and uses sweet potatoes as a base making it ultra healthy. See my note about pureeing it before you add the peppers and chickpeas giving it an amazing taste. Oh and by the way tamari is soy sauce – well not really but good enough – use low sodium as it tastes just as good and does not take away from the health of this dish.

Gypsy Soup

Ingredients:

- 3-4 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 2 cloves crushed garlic
- 2 cups chopped, peeled sweet potatoes or winter squash
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped fresh tomatoes
- 3/4 cup chopped sweet peppers
- 1-1/2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 3 cups stock or water
- Dash of cinnamon, dash of cayenne
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon tamari
- 2 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Directions:

In a soup kettle sauté onions, garlic, celery, and sweet potatoes in olive oil for about 5 minutes. Add seasonings, except the tamari, and the stock or water. Simmer, covered for 15 minutes. When vegetables are soft I like to puree this whole lot so the soup has a thick base. The original recipe does not ask you to do this. Though I find the simple act of pureeing the sweet potatoes mixture in a blender or using a hand blender does wonders for this soup. Add remaining vegetables and cooked chickpeas. Simmer another 10 minutes or so until all the vegetables are as tender as you like them.

Note: The vegetables used in this soup are flexible. Any orange vegetable can be combined with green. For example, peas or green beans can replace the peppers. Carrots can be used instead of or in addition to the squash or sweet potatoes.

Serves: 6- 8 people.

[Source: Modified by Paul Born from the *Moosewood Cookbook*, by Mollie Katzen]



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