

Healthorium®

By Mimi Borger

“Homemade ‘souperfood’ nutritious and simple to make”

Growing up, I don't recall my mother wasting anything. Furniture was recovered or refinished, worn-out clothes became “wash-the-dog” clothes then rags; and the almost meatless beef bones the butcher gave out for free were transformed into delicious soup. On cold wintry evenings, with one deep eye-rolling breath I could drink in the smell of the paradise that was my mother's kitchen. Unlike the fleeting smell of white bread and canned soup, the aroma of fresh baked bread and homemade soup often permeated the house and remains in my mind as pleasant memory. I felt almost satisfied just eating the air.

In 1954, Gerry Thompson invented and named the Swanson TV dinner. By 1961, on occasional Sunday evenings, Mom would heat the little aluminum trays of perfect looking food, and the entire family would eat TV dinners set on trays in the living room. While eating, we watched wrestling on our small black and white screen mounted in a 3 foot-wide wood cabinet. Those evenings weren't so much about the food as they were about Mom enjoying convenience, Dad watching wrestling, and us kids feeling like we were living on the edge of modern time.

Plenty can be said about the evolution of processed food; volumes have been filled to be sure. Canned soup has been around longer than my oldest living relative, still there is no excuse for the generally denatured content, modicum of nutrition and a sizeable serving of chemically created additives, preservatives, sweeteners, hydrogenated, hydrolyzed and other alleged “natural” ingredients found in most of today's convenience foods. Without espousing the benefits or drawbacks, I believe a significant and positive indicator of the direction of Western eating habits is that our local Wal-Mart now sells organic foods. It was not too long ago that those who insisted on organic, whole, natural, fresh and raw foods were considered “health nuts”. In retrospect, they were ahead of the curve.

Homemade soup is not only superior to canned in nutrition, flavor and aroma, but is inexpensive and very simple to make (after all, even cave people made soup without the benefit of modern stoves or electricity.)

Place meat bones in a stainless steel pot or ceramic crockpot with plenty of cold water -- I prefer beef ribs, pork ribs or chicken since once cooked the bones are easy to remove from the broth. If possible, let sit for _ hour before cooking, but if in a hurry, bring them to a boil, then turn the heat down to simmer (about _ way between low and medium). Skim the froth off the top, cover and cook slowly -- an hour will do, but simmering for 6 or more hours is best. Remove the bones and for flavor and health add unrefined salt, pepper, herbs and garlic, chopped fresh or frozen vegetables like onions, leeks, carrots, celery, broccoli, beets, peppers,

zucchini or tomatoes. Brown rice, noodles, chopped potatoes, beans, a pint or two of cream, leftover gravy -- almost anything can be added to create a complete dinner. Serve with whole grain bread or a crisp salad on the side. Soup is great as a leftover too. As it cools, the structure of the ingredients breaks down, changing the flavor and creating a taste sometimes even better than the 'firsttimes.'

"Souperfood" is heavenly in taste and smell, a cure-all full of minerals and vitamins, healing both physically and mentally. It is beneficial to almost every part and system of the body -- respiratory, digestive, circulatory, glandular and skeletal. It is healthful to the brain and builds the immune system.

My father observed, "Years ago living on a farm, I didn't realize that all the food we ate was so valuable. We used cow manure for fertilizer, raised grass fed cattle, and picked bugs off the vegetables; my mother made our bread; we skimmed the fat off the top of the milk; we ate berries off the bushes. Now, stores label foods like that as 'organic' and expensive."

An added benefit -- you don't even need own a can opener.

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