

Chick Pea Chowder

Whatever the season, soups are just an excellent way to eat! For the health conscious eater, especially those going through a lifestyle modification involving weight reduction, soup can be a way to introduce creativity and variety as well as satisfaction. A small, but well structured study attested to the high degree of satisfaction derived from soups leading subjects to actually consume almost 30% less calories when presented soup as opposed to the same food items in a different form.^{1, 2, 3} Soup is almost an essential dietary component of any lifestyle modification protocol!

Soups are traditionally one of the very first areas that apprentice cooks are given a chance to express their individual style and demonstrate their ability to work proficiently with ingredient variables.



Chick peas	2 pounds
Water	
Vegetable stock and reserved liquor	6 cups+/-
Vegetable broth cubes	6 each
Reserved liquor from mushroom stems/pieces	(1) 303 can
Garlic	1 bulb
Bay leaves	2 each
Thyme	1 tsp
Oregano	1 tsp
Adobo	1 tsp
Bragg's Aminos	1 Tbls
White Worcestershire	1 Tbls
Diced tomatoes in juice	(2) 303 cans
Celery	4-5 stalks
Red "new" potatoes	6-8 medium
Onions	2 medium
Cauliflower	1 head
Green pepper	2 large
Cooked chick peas	
Mushroom stems/pieces	(1) 303 can

For me, soups provided a much needed creative outlet during my transition from a line cook with a job to a professional chef with a career. Learning to cook can seem like an endless repetition of mindless basic culinary technique; creating soup offers a chance to use all those skills to actually make something exciting that you can share with others!

But more than that; soup can be a real money saver! Almost always made from the most humble ingredients, soups are an ideal place to utilize leftovers, scraps, and reserved cooking liquids.

This is a non-fat, vegan take-off on the tomato based *Manhattan* clam chowder. It's an extremely fast soup that lends itself easily to variation. The classic chowder flavor combination of onion, celery, garlic, and thyme in a tomato broth with potato is enhanced by the addition of garbanzo beans, mushrooms, and cauliflower; they don't make soups more basic than this one.

Chick peas cook really quickly so you don't need a pressure cooker, it helps with consistency though. I use a 3.5 liter pressure cooker to make a batch with 2 pounds of chick peas. Add as much water as you can into the pressure cooker or pot; we want plenty of cooking liquid to use as the base for the soup. Pressure cook on medium heat for 30 minutes and cook quickly, strain, and shock the beans, reserving the liquid; we'd like the chick peas to bite back a little bit to offer texture variance. I often cook a little *more* than 2 pounds of beans so that I can take some out to make a chick pea salad on the same day to save time in the kitchen; the soup does fine with as little as $\frac{3}{4}$ of the cooked beans, so by all means make a salad as well.

It's essential to have all the ingredients cut and ready to go before you start. As the pictures show, this is not a finesse soup, so chop quickly leaving the vegetables in pretty large chunks. Keep in mind that the soup will be reheated several times over the course of the following week and larger cuts will hold their shape and texture better. It might be a little crunchy on Sunday so it isn't all mush on Friday. Pay attention to the celery, it's one of the vegetables that may take substantially longer to cook in the winter months; in the dead of winter you might want to actually peel your celery.



Place the vegetable stock and reserved liquids in an $8\frac{1}{2}$ quart pot with all the seasonings and tomatoes. Bring to a simmer and add the vegetables, the longest cooking first, allowing the soup to *just* return to a simmer before adding the next. Generally the list will go: celery (pause), potatoes (pause), onions, cauliflower (pause), green pepper. Add the mushroom and cooked beans last, turn off the heat, and correct the seasoning. It will take some patience and practice to recognize, but the soup is done *just* when the vegetables open up and yield their essence to the broth. When you taste that this has happened, cover and remove from the heat and allow the flavors to amalgamate for a minute.

With practice this soup will take about 40 minutes from start to finish and if you're smart you'll have a chick pea *salad* done in the same time as well!

¹ Bell EA, Rolls BJ. Effect of water content of food on satiety. *FASEB Journal*. 1999;13:A870.

² Rolls BJ, Bell EA, Thorwart ML. Water incorporated into a food but not served with a food decreases energy intake in lean women. *Am. J. Clin. Nutr.* 1999;70:448-455.

³ Mattes R. Soup and Satiety. *Physiol Behav.* 2005;83(5):739-47.