

YUMMY NORTHWEST

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SERVING IDAHO, MONTANA, OREGON, AND WASHINGTON

Soup's on!

In her book, *French Provincial Cooking*, Elizabeth David says she doesn't like the idea that you can toss anything into a pot to make soup. People who habitually throw ingredients together willy-nilly, she writes, end up "inducing a mood of gloomy apprehension in their families and guests."

But is this true? No doubt care must be taken to combine ingredients that harmonize well, but soup should be easy to make, and leftovers are entirely welcome. Soup made with loving enthusiasm can bring people happily to your table and provide comfort and nutrition in equal measure.

In this issue, meet some of the lovely and talented women who know how to create soup that warms bodies and hearts.

The Soup Ladies

Interview with Linda White

When and why did the group start? About 8 or 9 years ago Ginger Passarelli started serving soup at her church and invited Sue Levy to help. After a while they became known as the Soup Ladies. Other women in the community asked to help. A few weeks after Hurricane Katrina hit [in 2005], several ladies went down to assist. At that time, Ginger realized that the emergency workers were not being taken care of, so she had the idea to start feeding First Responders. Several more women asked to volunteer and took several more trips in the span of 18 months back to Mississippi to feed Katrina survivors. We organized, registered as a non-profit group, and began working with King County Search and Rescue, and local police and fire departments to feed the volunteers that respond to emergency situations; in some situations we also take care of the victims.



What is this stuff?

Simmer something in water for a while and you have the basis for soup. While words like *stock* and *broth* are often used interchangeably in everyday language, here are the official definitions.

Bouillon – From the Old French word "to boil," this can be either broth or stock (see below). In the late 1800s, bouillon was dehydrated into flakes, and by the early 1900s was sold in cube form as a substitute for meat extract. Now it is most commonly seen on store shelves either as foil-wrapped cubes, which frequently contain mostly salt, or thick pastes in jars.

Broth – Made without bones, from vegetable matter or deboned meat.

Consommé – A clarified broth or stock; often an egg white is used in the process of clarification.

Stock – Made with bones; when cooled, it should jell. Stock can also include vegetable matter for additional flavor.

How many Soup Ladies are there? There are 11 of us that have been active for the past 2 years. Seven ladies in the past month asked to join, so in February we are having a recruitment meeting to get these ladies – and men – trained.

How much soup do you serve at an average event? There is no such thing as an average event. Every situation is different. I believe the favorite soup is the Stroganoff. The most we have served is about 3,500 people in Mississippi. Locally, we have served up to 100.

Do you make only soup, or do you also serve other foods? We do serve up other food depending on the mission. When it lasts several days we will cook up breakfast scrambles, pastas, casseroles, and salads, and bring fruit, water, coffee/tea, and brownie bites, depending on the need.

When you are on the scene of an emergency, do you also help in other ways besides serving the food? We do not participate in other ways. Sometimes we don't even do the serving. Recently, we delivered food to a site where a family had been murdered, and the investigation took several days. Many of the officers know us, so when our truck pulls up they come and get the food and equipment. Later, it is returned to the restaurant.

Do you have a "most memorable" moment? Not one in particular, but seeing the gratitude in the eyes of those we serve is enough for us.

How do you pay for soup and travel expenses? Ginger owns a restaurant in Black Diamond, Mama Passarelli's, so she lets us prepare food in her kitchen and usually provides ingredients. Some of the volunteers buy things, too. We all paid our own way on the Mississippi trips and even bought the food in Gulfport to cook.

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Is this the only job the Soup Ladies have, or do you all balance full-time jobs, too? **Most of us have jobs. The Soup Ladies is purely volunteer, no paid positions. Ginger owns a restaurant, and we have a manager of commercial/investment properties, a District Court judge, a casino manager, a human resources manager for a grocery store, a minister, and others, too.**

What kind of support do you need/want most? **What we need most is cash. When we mentioned that we wanted to purchase a mobile kitchen and towing vehicle, a local Rotary group raised about \$25,000 for us, and our King County Council gave us approximately \$41,000 and a truck, so we really need sustaining operating funds. Prayers are always wanted – for those who are hurt or lost and need assistance and for the emergency workers.**

What advice do you have for someone wanting to start a similar group? **We welcome others to start programs in their neighborhood. We are working toward some sort of training program, and we have an attorney, who volunteers his time, assisting us in working out the legal aspect of chapters of The Soup Ladies. For those who want to start something in their own community, get to know your local police and fire department staff. Get involved by offering your assistance. A little goes a long way.**

Can you share a recipe? **We don't really have recipes. We just throw stuff together, and off we go!**

The Soup Ladies is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization headquartered in Black Diamond, Wash. You can make an online donation at soupladies.org.



Space saver

A tip from Chloe

Let your homemade soup cool, then store in freezer bags: Place a bag in a glass or cup and pour in a single serving of soup. Squeeze out extra air and place in the freezer.



Roasted Tomato Soup

Submitted by Chloe, based on a recipe by Tyler Florence

2 1/2 pounds fresh tomatoes
6 cloves garlic, peeled
2 small onions, sliced
1/2 cup olive oil
Salt and pepper
1 quart stock
2 bay leaves
4 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil leaves, optional

Wash, core, and cut the tomatoes into halves. Spread the tomatoes, garlic cloves, and onions on a baking tray. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Roast in a 450-degree oven for 30 to 40 minutes or until caramelized.

Transfer vegetables to a large stock pot. Add 3/4 of the stock, bay leaves, and butter. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 15 to 20 minutes or until liquid has reduced by a third.

Wash and dry basil leaves, if using, and add to the pot. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup until smooth. Return soup to low heat, and adjust consistency with remaining stock, if necessary. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Note: I don't measure any ingredients exactly; I put in however many onions I've got on hand, and I probably use more than six cloves of garlic.

Soulful soup

Since 1993 the women of St. Joseph Parish in Big Timber, Montana, have been making soup – lots of soup. Each year, they feed over 200 people at the town's annual Christmas bazaar, thereby raising money for the church.

Wild rice soup is always in demand but to provide a choice, a pot of beef barley is also put on to simmer.

In February, during Lent, a weekly free Soup Supper precedes an evening devotional service. The number of diners varies, but there is always plenty of soup to eat.

Soup truly warms the souls of this church family.



PLENTY OF WILD RICE SOUP FOR ALL!

The language of soup

Adapted from a story submitted by C. Dunham

In the sugarcane fields of Hawaii, workers came from many parts of the world. Most of them worked as indentured servants on the plantations, planting, hoeing, and carrying sugarcane in the hot sun.

At the end of the day, the laborers would pool their food to create a communal meal. A Filipino might have onions; a Portuguese leftover sausage; the Hawaiian chickens perhaps laid a few extra eggs. The workers would throw their ingredients into a pot and share. They called their soup *saimin*.

At these *saimin* meals, the Hawaiian pidgin developed. Like the ingredients of the shared soup, the laborers took words from each others' vocabularies to create a melting pot language.

About Yummy Northwest

Each monthly issue highlights an edible delight available in the Pacific Northwest and Montana.

Contact the editor

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