

Easy Black Bean and Sausage Chowder

Meat or vegan, this easy on the cook, hearty main dish soup comes together in a flash then bubbles away happily on the stove while I put my feet up and sip a glass of wine. Good the day it's made. Better the next. For serving, dollop with sour cream or plain yogurt and pair with Olive and White Wine Focaccia. Ole!

Soup's On...

And there's bread in the oven!

BY KARLA JONES SEIDITA, HOME ECONOMIST

Fall's here. Time for comfy sweaters, long walks in the crisp air and homemade soup. Fresh, hot, yummy homemade soup takes the wrinkles out of the day. It soothes the body, fills the belly and comforts the soul.

Homemade soup is easier to make than you think and you can improvise to your heart's content using up those pesky odds and ends lurking in the fridge. No sense wasting money these days.

With a side of bread, soup can be an easy-on-the-budget meal. But not just any bread – homemade bread.

Homemade bread is easier to make than you think, too, and it won't cost you a week's pay like store bought.

Let's get into the kitchen!



SERVES 4 TO 6 AS A MAIN DISH
POT SIZE: LARGE SAUCEPAN

INGREDIENTS

4 Tablespoons butter (dairy or vegan)
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 medium onions (diced – about 2 cups)
3 stalks celery (diced – about 1/1/2 cups)
16 oz. sausage (meat or vegan – any kind – cut into rounds if links)
2 (15.5 oz.) cans black beans (undrained)
2 teaspoons cumin
2 large bay leaves
2 medium potatoes (diced – peeled or not – about 2 cups)
2 cups corn (fresh, frozen or canned with liquid)
1 medium sweet potato (peeled and diced – about 2 cups)
½ green or red bell pepper (diced – about ½ cup)
¼ cup fresh parsley leaves (chopped or 2 Tablespoons dried)
1 Tablespoon liquid smoke
1 Tablespoon soy sauce
1 Tablespoon Gravy Master or Kitchen Bouquet
8 cups broth (any kind)

DIRECTIONS

Melt butter in a large saucepan. Add pepper, onions, celery and sausage. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sausage is cooked. Add remaining ingredients. Simmer, partially covered, until potatoes are soft and liquid is reduced by ¼ – about 40 minutes.

Olive & White Wine Focaccia

Everything's better with bread – especially this bread. So easy. So wonderful. So gourmet.

SERVES 4 TO 6

PAN SIZE: 8 INCHES SQUARE

INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups biscuit mix (like Bisquick)	1/3 cup dry white wine
½ cup orange cheddar cheese (shredded)	1 egg
½ cup salad olives (drained)	¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
	Topping: 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
	Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Position oven rack so focaccia will bake in center. Preheat to 400 degrees.
2. Grease pan or coat with baking spray.
3. In a medium bowl, combine baking mix, cheddar and olives. Stir in wine, egg and ¼ cup olive oil. Spread dough evenly into prepared pan.
4. Bake till lightly browned and slightly pulled away from sides of pan – 20 to 25 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and immediately drizzle 2 tablespoons of olive oil evenly over focaccia. Sprinkle with salt to taste. Cool in pan.



Amazing - No Knead Crusty Artisan Bread

Think making homemade bread is too much trouble? Too time consuming? Requires a skill you've yet to master? This recipe is a game changer. Serve with Fresh Carrot Bisque and your fav cheese.

MAKES 1 LARGE LOAF

PAN SIZE: A well-seasoned, cast iron Dutch oven (pot with lid) that's 10 inches wide at the top tapering to 8 inches at the bottom X 5 ½ inches deep is ideal. Any similar size, heavy, pot with lid works. Be sure your pot, lid and handles can take the heat of the 450 degree oven.

INGREDIENTS

- 8 cups unbleached all purpose flour (use 7 cups if your flour is bleached – see Bakers' Tip below)
- 2 packages active dry yeast (4 ½ teaspoons - not instant or bread machine yeast)
- 1 Tablespoon salt
- 3 cups warm water (99 to 100 degrees)

BAKERS' TIP

To measure flour, spoon into a "dry" measuring cup. Scrape off excess. Repeat as needed. Unbleached flour measures lighter than bleached so, for this recipe, you need more volume.

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large bowl, mix flour, yeast and salt. Stir in water forming a soft dough. Drape a (dry) paper towel over the bowl to cover. Let dough rest/rise 1 hour. Remove paper towel. Stir dough to deflate. Replace paper towel. Let dough rest/rise a 2nd time – 1 hour more.
2. After 30 minutes into the 2nd rest/rise, lightly grease the Dutch oven or mist with baking spray. Cover and place into cold oven. Set temperature to 450 degrees and let both oven and pan preheat for 30 minutes.
3. Remove pan from oven and carefully remove hot lid. Using a rubber spatula, scrape dough into hot pan. Replace cover. Return to oven. Bake, covered, 50 minutes. Remove cover. Bake till golden – about 15 minutes more. Remove pan from oven. Remove bread. Cool at least 20 minutes before cutting.

Fresh Carrot Bisque

Souper gourmet shop soup for a fraction of the cost. Pair with No Knead Crusty Artisan Bread – recipe follows. Amazing!

SERVES ABOUT 4

POT SIZE: MEDIUM SAUCEPAN

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fresh carrots (peeled and thinly sliced)
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 5 cups water
- Milk or cream to taste (dairy or plant)
- Salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

1. Put carrots, butter, sugar and water in a medium pot. Simmer (uncovered) until carrots are very soft and almost all the water has evaporated - about 40 minutes.
2. Puree carrots along with any small amount of water remaining in the pot. Add milk, cream or a combo to a consistency you like. Add salt to taste. Heat for serving.

DIY Onion Soup Mix

I'm a do it myself kind of cook. I like to have things around that I make with ingredients I know. Saves me money too. I like that.

Nice for soup in a hurry. Handy for recipes calling for an envelope of onion soup mix. And don't forget onion dip! Just stir into sour cream or yogurt.

MAKES 8 TABLESPOONS

(ONE RECIPE SUBS FOR 1 ENVELOPE PURCHASED MIX)

SOUP MIX INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup dried onion pieces
- 1 Tablespoon dried instant bouillon granules (any flavor – not cubes)
- 2 teaspoons onion powder
- Pinch pepper

FOR SOUP

Stir entire recipe into 6 cups water. Simmer (partially covered) 10-15 minutes. Serves 4. **L**