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Mrs Beeton's Cold Winter Soup!



May I present Mrs Beeton's Cold Winter Soup – the perfect dish to warm up your 'cockles'!

You see, whilst scouring through my 1906 edition of Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management, there I discovered her ONE and ONLY recipe to be of her very own creation – Benevolent Soup, which was originally known as Useful Soup for Benevolent Purposes.

Darlings, the history books dictate that in 1858 England endured a terribly harsh and deathly cold winter. So much so, our charitable, selfless, and kindly Mrs Beeton set up a soup kitchen from her home and served this hearty, meat-based (ox cheek) chunky vegetable, and liquor-laced concoction - in Miss Windsor's case Thatchers cider! to the hungry, homeless, or destitute folk of Hatch End, Pinner, London.

May I add, my revision of this wintery dish is a fabulous fusion between Mrs Beeton's original 1858 recipe and the 1906 version as noted above – and of course, I followed her instructions and cooking methods thoroughly, thus achieved excellence. And although I scaled down the ingredient measurements considerably, Mrs Beeton's Cold Winter Soup is ample to serve a large family with leftovers, which one may decanter into a Tupperware dish and pop in the freezer for later.

Preparation time: 30-40 mins

Cooking time: 3 hours

Serves a large family!

Ingredients

- 2 ox cheeks (request from your butcher)
- 6 large carrots
- 1 very large wedge
- 4 stalks of celery
- 2 huge onions
- 500ml of any Somerset cider, but I prefer to use Thatchers.
- 3 litres of water
- 360g red split lentils
- 1/2 white cabbage
- Large bunch of fresh herbs – such as rosemary, coriander, flat leaf parsley, thyme.
- 2 beef stock cubes
- 3 vegetable stock cubes

Equipage

- A very large stew pan with lid.

Method

1. Before you start, please lather up your mitts with a jolly good helping of Pears soap!
2. Now you're squeaky clean, one may prepare the meat by cutting it into cubes. Then chop up the vegetables any way you fancy and set the white cabbage to one side.
3. Transfer the meat to your stew pan, sprinkle with sea salt, pour in the water, and cover with lid.
4. Bring to the boil and skim off the frothy stuff. Reduce the heat to a simmer then crumble the stock cubes into the meaty liquid, add the cider, vegetables, bunch of herbs, and salt and pepper – give it a jolly good stir!
5. Return the lid and simmer gently for approximately 2 hours.
6. Now, carefully spoon in the lentils and white cabbage. Simmer for 1 hour.
7. Once cooked, add salt and pepper to taste.
8. Then serve to your guests from a decorative soup terrine – don't forget your soup bowls and spoons!
9. Enjoy with a scrumptious glass of Somerset cider – How spiffing!

Miss Windsor x