

CARROT, RICE, AND NEW POTATO SOUP

Grating the carrot makes this a very quick soup to cook and creates a contrast with the diced potato. Both carrots and potatoes are such everyday ingredients that we often overlook how useful they are. Nutritionally speaking, they deliver a raft of essential vitamins and minerals.

2 ONIONS	1/3 cup RICE
1 tablespoon BUTTER	4 cups VEGETABLE TEA (page 26)
1 pound CARROTS	Chopped fresh PARSLEY to garnish
1/3 pound NEW POTATOES	

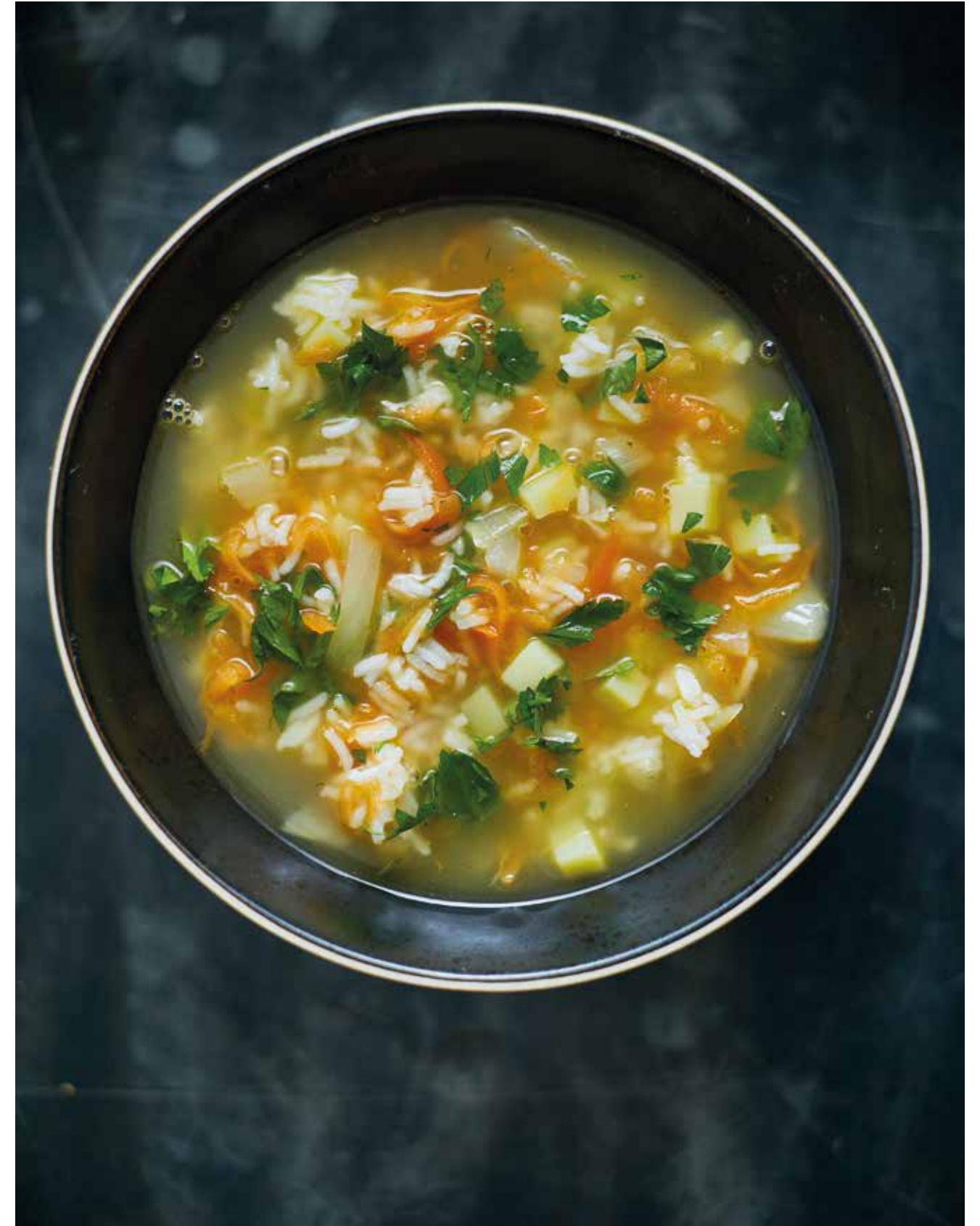
SERVES 4

Peel and dice the onion and sweat in a lidded pan with the butter. Grate the carrots, dice the potato into neat cubes, and add both to the onions. Mix well with a wooden spoon. Cover and sweat for 15 minutes.

In a separate pan, add the rice to cook in approximately 1/2 cup of the vegetable tea. Cook for 15 minutes, then take off the

heat and let stand for another 10 minutes. Add the remaining vegetable tea to the vegetables and cook over medium heat for 20 minutes. Then add in the cooked rice and parsley.

COOK'S TIP: A tablespoon of tomato paste will deepen the color.



VEGETABLE TEA

This is a sequence. It starts out as a light tea, becomes a soup and then transforms itself again and again. You can drink this first-stage broth as an alternative to tea and coffee.

Once you get the hang of it, vary the spices, vegetables, and herbs with the seasons.

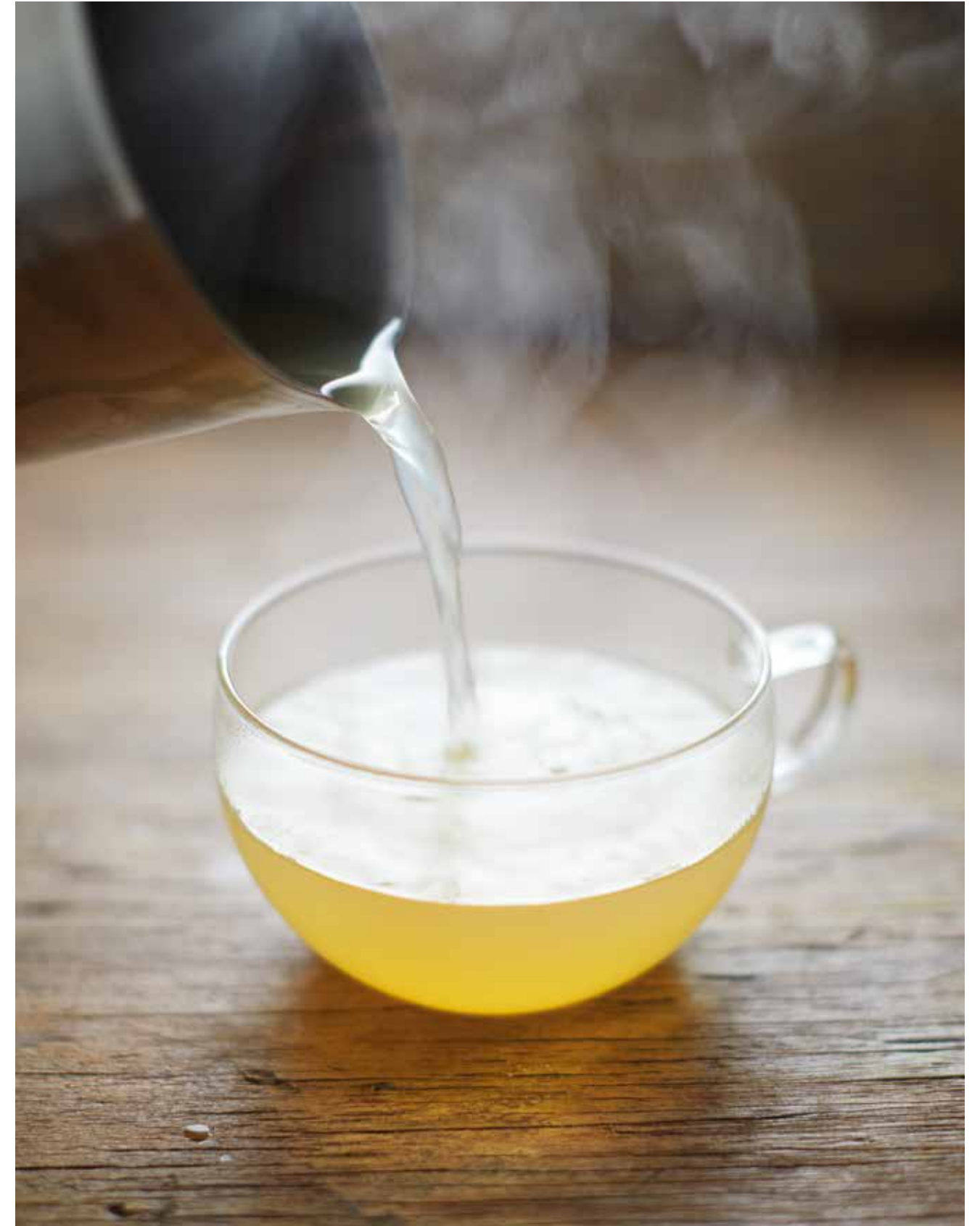
3 CARROTS	1 BAY LEAF
2 ONIONS	Bunch of fresh PARSLEY
1 LEEK	SEA SALT to taste
2 POTATOES	OLIVE OIL to serve (optional)
6 BLACK PEPPERCORNS	
	MAKES 1 GALLON

Bring 1 gallon of water to a boil in a deep pot or saucepan while you deal with the vegetables. Peel and trim the carrots and cut into thirds. Peel and quarter the onions. Trim and dice the leek. Quarter the potatoes—you can leave the skin on.

As the water comes to a boil, drop the vegetables in and add the spices. Trim the top leaves off the parsley, save for garnish, and throw the stalks in the mix. Cover and simmer gently for 30 minutes.

Strain and discard the vegetables, keeping only the liquid. Warm through, garnish with a few leaves of parsley, season with salt to taste, and add a slurp of olive oil if you like. Serve in a mug or glass or take a thermos to work.

COOK'S TIP: There's nothing wrong with the leftover vegetables. You can have them for dinner, dressed with a little meat broth. Or take out the potato and carrot, dice, and mix with mayonnaise for a cold salad.





CAULIFLOWER AND WILD MUSHROOM SOUP

This soup began life as a way of using up the offcuts from a recipe for cauliflower with cheese sauce. Cauliflower leaves are also useful steamed and served as a vegetable with oyster sauce. The water in which the cauliflower cooks can be used for broths; so too, the water in which dried mushrooms are constituted. This recipe brings them both together.

Handful of DRIED MUSHROOMS— SHIITAKE or any WILD MUSHROOMS, especially MORELS or PORCINIS 1 CAULIFLOWER	1 LEEK 2 stalks CELERY Handful of CILANTRO SERVES 4
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Soak the mushrooms in 1 quart of boiling water to reconstitute for about 15 minutes. If they are bigger than a soup spoon, then snip them smaller with scissors.

Put the cauliflower, whole, into a large pot and cover with boiling water. Trim and dice the leek and celery neatly and add to the pot. Add the cilantro stalks, reserving the leaves. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes until the vegetables are soft. Strain the broth and reserve a few cauliflower florets, the leek and the celery.

Transfer the mushrooms and their soaking liquid to a clean pot. Add a cup of the cauliflower broth (the remaining liquid can be added to another vegetable broth). Break off the florets from the cauliflower—two per serving. Add in the leek and celery. Warm through and serve each bowl with several leaves of cilantro.

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

You will get a deeper flavor if you use the Poached chicken broth (page 70), but there is nothing wrong with a lighter broth from roasted chicken. Either will work for this essential, restorative, parsimonious noodle soup, a catch-all standby to fight off colds and flu.

I have added some rice here for an extra dimension.

½ cup RICE	½ cup PASTA or NOODLES
1 tablespoon BUTTER	Handful of SPINACH
4 cups ROAST or POACHED CHICKEN BROTH (pages 69 and 70)	SERVES 4

Cover the base of a small pot with the rice. Melt the butter and stir in so all the grains are covered. Cover with the broth. Bring to a simmer and let it cook for 20 minutes.

Cook the pasta separately for 10 minutes, then drain and add to the soup. Lastly swirl in the spinach leaves to wilt.



POACHED CHICKEN BROTH

This broth uses a whole chicken, so you will be left with meat to use in other recipes. And because you don't want to overcook the meat, you can pull the breast and legs out of the mix after the first stage. For ideas about what to do with your leftover chicken from this recipe, see Laksa (page 62), Quick Tom Yum (page 81), or the Cock-a-leekie (page 83).

Small WHOLE CHICKEN	7 ounces MUSHROOMS
3 LEEKS	
2 CARROTS	MAKES 1 GALLON

Take the string off the chicken to free up its legs and lay in a large casserole dish or cooking pot. Cover with 1 gallon of cold water and bring to a simmer. Meanwhile, trim the leeks and slice them diagonally, about a thumb-length each. Trim and peel the carrots if necessary. When the water starts to bubble, pack the leeks, carrots, and mushrooms around the chicken. Cover and cook gently for 45 minutes on the stove.

Take off the heat and let stand. When cool enough to handle, lift the chicken out, carve off the breasts and legs and set them aside. If you are making the

Cock-a-leekie soup (page 83), take out the choice bits of carrots and leek as well so they don't overcook. Keep any juices and put them back in the stock with the rest of the carcass. Simmer for another 50 minutes and you will find the flavor develops "umami" creaminess. Strain the liquid and refrigerate until required.

COOK'S TIPS: To achieve a restaurant-style consommé, double up the process by poaching a second chicken in the same broth as you've cooked the first one so you are achieving twice the level of flavor.



ENGLISH GARDEN SOUP

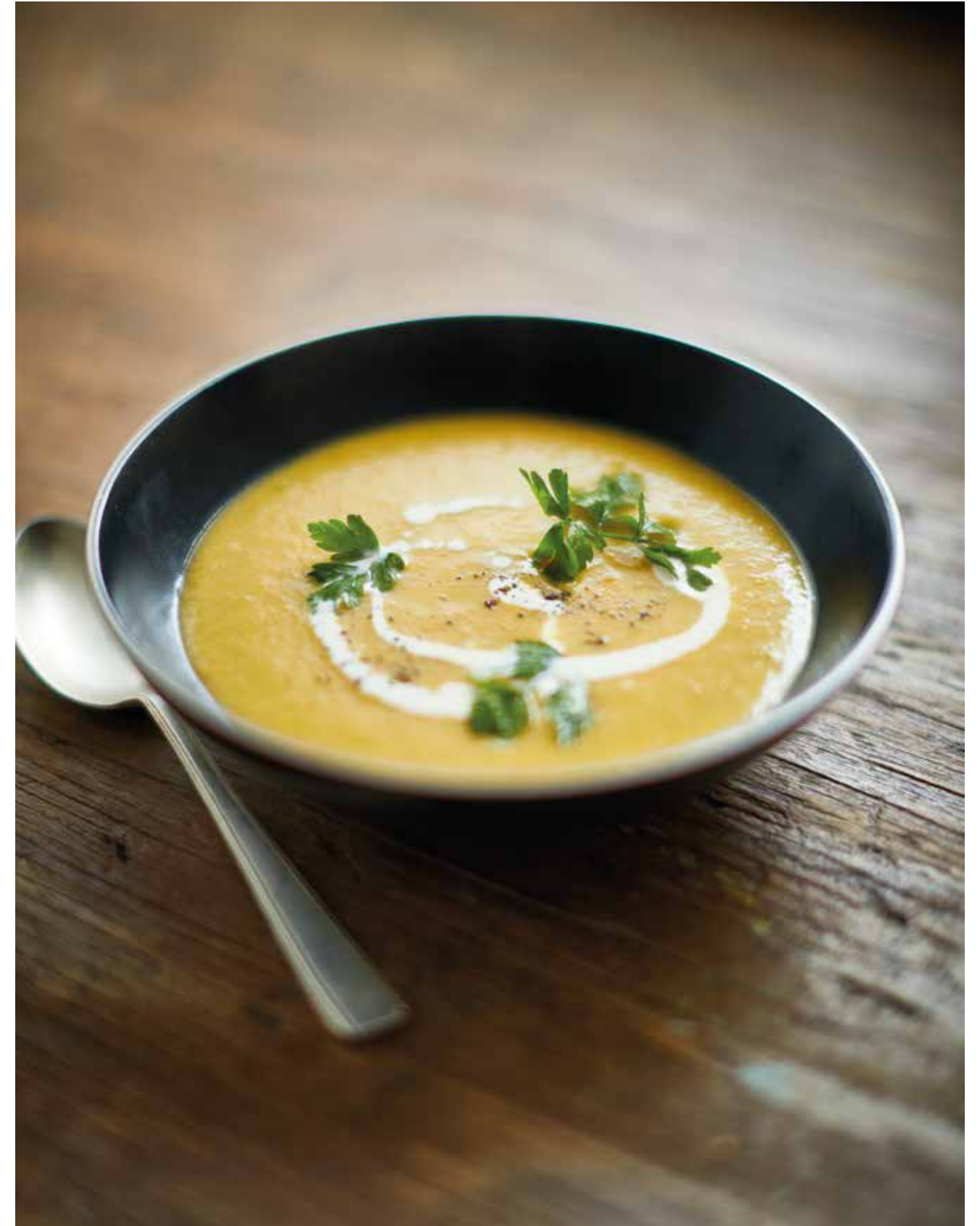
The garden provides an array of root vegetables that often get overlooked just because they are inexpensive. In fact, they are nutritious and worthy. Rutabaga, celery root, and even sweet potato would also fit in comfortably here. The Victorians advocated beef soup as a restorative for any kind of ill; this is a superior variation.

1 tablespoon BUTTER	1 BAY LEAF
1 ONION	4 cups BASIC BEEF BONE
3 stalks of CELERY	BROTH (page 93) or ROASTED
1 LEEK	BONE BROTH (page 94)
3 CARROTS	2 tablespoons HEAVY CREAM
3 PARSNIPS	(optional)
1 POTATO	
Bunch of fresh PARSLEY	SERVES 4

First, sweat the vegetables. Melt some butter in a wide pot over medium heat. Skin and dice the onion, celery and the leek and allow to soften in the butter. Top and tail the carrots, quarter lengthwise, dice, and add to the pot. Peel the parsnips and potato and dice, then add. Leave everything to soften for 10 to 15 minutes.

Then add the parsley stalks—reserving the leaves for garnish—the bay leaf, and the broth to cover well. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes.

Remove the herbs. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Liquidize in a blender or food processor, with a couple tablespoons of cream, if desired. Garnish with parsley to serve.



MAKING MEAT BROTHS

Meat and bone broths tend to need a little more military organization than other kinds of cooking. If you only have a small kitchen, then you need to rein in your ambitions to a few choice small cut recipes like Fresh pea and ham soup (page 112). If you have the space, then the first thing you need is a pot or casserole dish big enough to cope. Even then you will probably have to shop around for the smaller cuts. Beef bones tend to be pretty big so it is more practical to use smaller cuts like oxtail and short ribs, sometimes called “Jacob’s ladder.” Marrow bones are an overrated luxury from a soup point of view but if you have some, then poach or roast for 20 minutes, scoop out the marrow and hold it back for garnish.

This is also where cooking in the oven becomes less intrusive and you can just leave things alone to get on with themselves. Just keep checking every now and then that the liquid is not disappearing on you, and top up as you need and lower the oven temperature. How long should you cook? Well you can play around and have some fun but overnight is enough for me usually, although friends have kept going for 24 and 36 hours.

And just because you are cooking the bones for hours rather than minutes, it does not follow that the meat has to cook for the duration. They can be pulled out and set off on another path altogether.

BASIC BEEF BONE BROTH

This is an all-purpose, long-cook broth. I do not normally eat any of the meats cooked in the process but if you would like to, then hold back the shin and just give it a couple of hours at the end. Poaching meat in the broth is a good idea, too, but it is not really a soup idea. If you want something quicker, see the Small kitchen beef and tomato soup (page 106).

1 pound BEEF SHIN	2 CARROTS
1 pound SHORT RIB	2 ONIONS
1 pound OXTAIL	3 stalks of CELERY
1 glass RED WINE or VINEGAR	
	MAKES 1 GALLON

Preheat the oven to low—about 250°F. Spread the meats and bones across the bottom of a large casserole dish. Cover with 1⅓ gallons cold water and heat on the stove. Bring to a simmer and watch a few minutes for any scum that may rise. Ladle it off if it does. Add the glass of wine or vinegar, which will help to leach out the nutrients from the bones.

Transfer the casserole dish to the oven and leave for 6 to 7 hours to cook away, just checking occasionally to see that the water has not disappeared. If it is losing liquid, top up afresh and turn the oven down a notch. When you feel happy

with it—you can usually smell what is going on—turn off the oven and let cool overnight at room temperature. If you continue for longer, just be wary that the liquid does not disappear on you.

In the morning, take out the bones and meats, decant the liquid and store in the refrigerator. When it is set into gelatin, scrape off any white fat.

To finish, put the liquid back in a pot and bring to a simmer. Roughly chop your vegetables, keeping the skins on, add to the pot and simmer for 60 to 90 minutes. Then strain and store in the refrigerator until required.

OLD-FASHIONED SPLIT PEA SOUP

This is old-school, peasant, country fare. You can imagine digging out dried peas from a sack and pulling the ham hock down from the rafters of an old farmhouse.

It is completely different to the Fresh pea and ham soup (page 112). This one is rib-stickingly nutritious and filling; ideal winter food.

½ cup dried SPLIT PEAS	Chopped fresh PARSLEY
1 HAM HOCK, unsmoked	BREAD, to serve
2 tablespoons HEAVY CREAM	
VINEGAR, MUSTARD, and	SERVES 4
OLIVE OIL for vinaigrette	

Soak the split peas overnight in cold water. Place the ham hock in a cooking pot, cover with water and bring to a boil. Let it bubble for a couple of minutes and skim off any scum that rises. Throw away the water and fill up with fresh water. Bring back to a boil, then let simmer on the stove over the lowest heat for 4 to 5 hours until the hock has completely collapsed.

Strain the peas and add to a casserole dish. Cover with hock broth and bring to a good rolling boil for 5 minutes. Then turn down and let it simmer for 50 minutes. It

is done when the peas start to burst. Turn off the heat. Liquidize thoroughly to a purée. Stir in the cream.

While the soup is cooking, remove the ham hock from the broth and trim the meat away from the fat and bones. Cut into small shards. Mix up a sharp little vinaigrette with vinegar, mustard, and olive oil—in that order—to taste. Spoon over the ham shards and toss in chopped fresh parsley.

Serve the soup topped with the ham vinaigrette and fresh bread.



MONKFISH WITH GINGER SOUP

Dashi works perfectly as a poaching broth for the monkfish. Never boil the broth here; keep everything just below boiling.

2 SHALLOTS	1 tablespoons VEGETABLE OIL
1 GARLIC CLOVE	4 cups JAPANESE BONITO BROTH (page 144)
Bunch of SPRING ONIONS	2 tablespoons SOY SAUCE
Thumb-length piece of GINGER	1 LIME
2 SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS	Fresh CILANTRO LEAVES to garnish
½ RED PEPPER	
12 ounces MONKFISH FILLET	
	SERVES 4

Peel and dice the shallots and garlic. Chop the spring onions. Peel and slice the ginger. Trim the mushrooms and cut the pepper into thin shards. Remove the skin from the monkfish and cube the flesh.

Heat a wok or large sauté pan and moisten with the vegetable oil. Add the shallot, garlic, and ginger and stir-fry for 3 minutes until fragrant. Add the Japanese bonito broth, soy sauce and the juice from

the lime. Lay in the fish fillet pieces carefully and cover. Let it cook very gently over low heat. How long you cook it for depends on the thickness of the fish, but you want to be as gentle as possible, so that it cooks as the broth drops in temperature.

Lastly add the red pepper, mushroom, and spring onions. Finish with cilantro leaves to garnish.



JAPANESE BONITO BROTH

This is dashi, the basic Japanese cooking broth for all clear soups, which is simply kombu seaweed water infused with dried tuna flakes. The glutamates in the seaweed create the sense of “umami.” It is most familiar as the basis for miso soup.

Thumb-length piece of KOMBU
4 tablespoons DRIED
BONITO FLAKES

MAKES 4 CUPS

In a pot, soak the kombu in 4 cups of water and slowly bring to a simmer. The moment it starts to boil, take off the heat and leave to infuse for 10 minutes (or longer). Add the bonito flakes and infuse for another 5 minutes. Strain.

COOK'S TIP: You can reuse the kombu in other recipes. It can be cooked in a mix of soy and mirin for tsukudani, which is usually served cold with rice. Alternatively, combine four parts of dashi to one of soy, one of mirin, and one of brown sugar to make a dipping sauce or as a base for noodles.

