SOUP FOR PRESSURE CANNING

BOTTOM TO TOP: tomato soup, curried pumpkin & kumara, Thai chicken & corn, leek & potato, cullen skink smoked fish.

MY CHICKEN STOCK RECIPE

Good soup starts with a good stock. You can use water but stock makes the soup. I like chicken stock and my recipe is pretty simple. Take the frame of a chicken (roast chicken frames and leftovers give a really rich stock) and cover it with water. Add a chopped onion, ½ a stick of celery, bay leaf, carrot, sprig of thyme, couple of sprigs of parsley, salt and a few white peppercorns.

Bring it up to the boil, skim the scum off the top that forms initially as the meat juices coagulate or your stock will taste sour and be cloudy. Once you’ve done this cook for a few hours on low. Strain, let it set in the fridge and skim off any fat that sets on the top. Use
within a couple of days or you can also bottle your stock in your pressure canner for use throughout the year.

**Basic Pressure Canning Method**

If you buy a pressure canner it will come with detailed instructions which you must follow to the letter. Cooking time varies for different food groups and your canner will tell you what pressure and what length of time is going to produce you a safely bottled result.

Here’s an overview of the basic method I’ve used for pressure canning soups:

1. work out the capacity of the jars you want to fill and then size your soup recipe up or down to get that amount
2. put your pressure canner on the heat with the recommended water level in it and start heating it up with the lid off
3. heat your clean Agee jars in the oven at 60C to make sure they don’t crack when you put hot soup into them.
4. chop your soup ingredients into even sized chunks
5. put all your soup ingredients into a soup pot, cook it and adjust seasoning
6. ladle the soup into each hot jar spreading the solids evenly between the jars
7. leave 2.5cm of headroom for the soup to expand or the jars will break.
8. wipe the rim clean with a paper towel and put a perfit seal on the jar.
9. screw a band on until it is finger tight – don’t over tighten.
10. place the jars in the canner on a rack in the bottom and use a second rack if you want to stack them 2 deep

**Thai Chicken & Corn Soup**

This is a culmination of all my favourite chicken soup recipes from over the years. Chicken soup is pretty forgiving as long as you use good stock and go easy on the celery.

To make x10 pint jars of soup you will need:
- 600 grams of cooked and cubed chicken meat
- 1 kilo of chopped vegetables – I use:
  - ½ a stick of celery
  - 150 grams spring onions
  - 600 grams corn off the cob
  - 250 grams carrots
- 4 ½ litres of chicken stock
- Thai flavourings of your choice. I use juice from a lime, sesame oil, chilli paste, fish sauce, dried cumin and coriander, a ripped up kaffir lime leaf and salt to taste.
**Curried Pumpkin & Kumara Soup**

The secret to a great pumpkin soup is to get a dry fleshed pumpkin like these lovely little butternuts and dry roast big chunks of them on a tray in the oven with a little butter, grated nutmeg and salt on the top of each chunk. Criss-cross slashes in the top of each chunk so the butter sinks in.

This recipe is my adaptation of the famous (yes there is such a thing) curried parsnip soup by Jane Grigson from the late 60’s.

To make x10 pint jars of soup you will need:

- 600 grams of cooked and cubed pumpkin
- 300 grams of cubed parsnip
- 2 chopped onions
- 4 ½ litres of chicken stock
- 2 Tablespoons of chopped chives or parsley
- 1 Tablespoon of curry powder
- salt and pepper to taste

If you’re not pressure canning it sweat the onions in a little butter with the curry powder. If you are then sprinkle the curry powder over the cubed pumpkin and parsnip and dry roast them in the oven.

**Leek & Potato Soup**

Not my favourite soup but it is someone else’s. Apparently mine is almost as good as his mums.

To make x10 pint jars of soup you will need:

- 1 kg of leeks, washed and cut into rings
- 600 grams of peeled and cubed potatoes
- 2 chopped onions
- 4 ½ litres of chicken stock
- salt and pepper to taste
- 8 good sprigs of parsley, chopped

If you’re not pressure canning it sweat the onions and leeks in a good nob of butter and add the stock and seasoning. This soup you really do need to add cream or milk when you reheat it for the full leek and potato experience.
CULLEN SKINK (SMOKED FISH) SOUP

A classic smoked fish and potato soup from Scotland. When I lived in the UK I bought a glass jar of this soup in a posh supermarket because the name intrigued me but I soon got hooked and learnt how to make it. Heated up with a bit of milk and fresh parsley and a few slices of thick toast and butter it is a real cold day binder as most Scottish fare is.

Haddock is the traditional fish for this dish but I’ve used Kawhai or Ling is excellent if you can get it. Whatever fish you choose just make sure it’s firm fleshed or it will go mushy in the soup.

To make x10 pint jars of soup you will need:
- 1.2 kilos of smoked fish chopped into cubes
- 2 large onions chopped
- 800 grams of potatoes peeled and cubed
- 4 litres of chicken stock
- Salt and pepper to taste.
- 2 Tablespoons of chopped parsley

If you’re not pressure canning it you would sweat the onions in a little butter and then add the other ingredients and cook until the potatoes are cooked. When you serve it you can add more fresh chopped parsley and cream or milk if you want.