



Chapter-IX

Soup Preparation - Thin Soups

Soups are made up of a wide variety of ingredients. The best soups are made from the best available ingredients. Soup should have the pronounced taste of the major flavouring components. If this is a meat-base it should be highly flavourful and mature. Fish or shellfish should be perfectly fresh and so should vegetables, especially when they provide the dominant flavour of soups.

Basic Ingredients for Soup Preparation

Liquid

Quality stock forms the basis of most soups, but water, vegetable stock cubes, fruit and vegetable juices, and milk may also be used. Stocks need to be appropriately matched to the main ingredients in the soup being prepared.

Seasonings

Herbs and spices are added to soup to increase flavour. Bouquet garni (bay leaf, thyme, cloves, parsley – bound together in a cloth container) are included in virtually all soup preparation and should be discarded as soon as it has contributed sufficient flavour.

Thickening agents

A roux can be used as a thickening agent in soup. Alternatively a thick consistency in soup can be achieved by puréeing.

Other thickening agents that can be used include potatoes, rice, pulses and pasta. Some cream soups are finished with a liaison (a mixture of one part egg yolk well-blended into three parts cream). The soup is then cooked only enough to thicken the egg; it is never boiled.

Garnishes

Garnishes are used to enhance the soup's appearance and flavour. The garnish should be sufficient and appropriate to the soup prepared and appropriately cut for ease of eating with a soup spoon.





Cooking techniques for Soup Preparation

Basic preparation and cooking methods are used in soup making, e.g. mixing, chopping, blending and straining. Some soups may require you to use techniques such as:

- Purée – using a food processor or liquidiser to transform soup ingredients into a smooth pulp
- Skimming – using a spoon or skimmer to remove froth, scum or fat from the surface of stock or soup
- Dicing – cutting ingredients into small cubes.

General Principles for Soup Preparation

- Always use fresh ingredients.
- When making a beef stock, brown the meat and bones. Browning and sweating vegetables for a vegetable stock helps improve the colour and intensify the flavour.
- Bring slowly to the boil. Long, slow simmering is necessary to extract the food value and flavour.
- Beef stock should simmer for 4-5 hours, chicken stock for approximately 3 hours, fish stock for 20 minutes and vegetable stock for 1-2 hours.
- Remove the fat or scum from surface as the stock is cooking.
- Cool stock rapidly and refrigerate. When cold, the fat can be easily removed from the top.
- Vegetables may be cut roughly for purées, but diced for broths.
- The soup should be stirred from time to time to prevent the starchy vegetables from sticking.
- Do not store stock in metal containers as this may discolour the stock or make it cloudy.
- Soup should be tasted for seasoning and flavour, before serving.





- No soup benefits from hours on the stove – not only will the flavour become dull and flat, but the nutritive value will be greatly decreased.

Identify when a soup is cooked

Smell, texture, consistency, taste and colour are all used to identify a soup is cooked to the required standard. If soup is overcooked, taste and texture will be affected because vegetables and other ingredients become soggy making them unpalatable. The soup will need to be discarded and the ingredients that are wasted will increase the operating costs of your workplace. Soups that are either burnt undercooked or of the wrong consistency will not meet the quality standard of your organisation and are likely to result in customer complaints if they are served.

Types of soup

- Broths are unstrained soups made with a stock base with the addition of cereals such as rice or barley, diced vegetables, chopped meat or fish.
- Clear soups like consommés are stocks that are clarified with the help of protein coagulation process.
- Velouté soups are prepared from a blond roux and flavoured stock. Vegetables, meat, fish or poultry are also added and later removed by sieving before serving. A Velouté is thickened with a liaison of egg yolk and cream.
- Cream soups are made by adding cream in the final stages of preparation. The cream serves to thicken the soup and gives it a rich velvety taste.
- Purées are made from fresh vegetables and pulses, cooked in stock. The soup is finished by passing all cooked ingredients through a sieve or by using a food processor to form a thick smooth pulp.

Clear soups

These soups are all based on a clear, un-thickened broth or stock. They may be served plain or garnished with a variety of vegetables and meats.



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- *Broth and bouillon* are two terms used in many ways but, in general, they both refer to simple, clear soups without solid ingredients. A Broth can be defined as a flavorful liquid obtained from the simmering of meats and/or vegetables.
 - *Consommé* is a rich, flavorful stock or broth that has been clarified to make it perfectly clear and transparent.

The word *consommé* means, literally, "completed" or "concentrated." Consommé is a strong, concentrated stock or broth.

Important thing to remember for the preparation of consommé is that the stock or broth must be strong, rich, and full-flavored. Clarification is second in importance to strength.

Clarification

Some proteins, especially those called albumins, dissolve in cold water. When the water is heated, they gradually solidify or coagulate and rise to the surface. If we control this process carefully, these proteins collect all the tiny particles that cloud a stock and carry them to the surface. In this process we get a clear and transparent stock.

Basic Ingredients

1. *Lean ground* meat is one of the major sources of protein that enables the clarification. It also contributes flavor to the consommé. The meat must be lean because fat makes the consommé cloudy.
2. *Egg whites* are very important ingredients because, being mostly albumin, they greatly strengthen its clarifying power.
3. *Mirepoix* and other seasoning and flavoring ingredients are usually included because they add flavor to the finished consommé. They do not help in the clarification, but added to give solidity to the raft. The raft is the coagulated meat mixture, floating in a solid mass on top of the consommé. The mirepoix must be cut into fine pieces so that it will float with the raft.





4. *Acid ingredients* (tomato products for beef or chicken consommé, lemon juice or white wine for fish consommé) are often added because the acidity helps coagulate the protein.

Consommé

S.No	Ingredients	Quantity
1	Cold Stock	1.5 lt
2	Minced Meat	500 gm
3	Egg White	02 no
4	Carrots	100 gm
5	Onion	50 gm
6	Leeks	25 gm
7	Celery	25 gm
8	Bay leaf	01 no.
9	Pepper corn	3-4 no.
10	Tomatoes	50 gm
11	Vinegar	05 ml
12	Salt	To taste
13	Pepper	To taste

1. Start with a well-flavored, cold, strong stock or broth.

If your stock is weak, reduce it until it is concentrated enough, then cool it before proceeding, or plan on simmering the consommé longer to reduce while clarifying.

2. Select a heavy stockpot or soup pot, preferably one with a spigot at the bottom. The spigot enables you to drain off the finished consommé without disturbing the raft.



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3. Combine the clear meat ingredients in the soup pot and mix them vigorously.
 4. Gradually add the cold, degreased stock and mix well with the clear meat.

The stock must be cold so that it doesn't cook the proteins on contact.

Mixing distributes the dissolved proteins throughout the stock so that they can collect all the impurities more easily.

5. Set the pot over a moderately low fire and let it come to a simmer very slowly.
6. Stir the contents occasionally so that the clear meat circulates throughout the stock and doesn't burn to the bottom.
7. When the simmering point is approaching, stop stirring. The clear meat will rise to the surface and form a raft.
8. Move to lower heat so that the liquid maintains a slow simmer. Do not cover. Boiling would break up the raft and cloud the consommé.
9. Let simmer for 2 hours without disturbing the raft.
10. Strain the consommé through a china cap lined with several layers of cheesecloth.

If you are not using a stockpot with a spigot, ladle the consommé out carefully without breaking up the raft.

Let the liquid drain through the cheesecloth by gravity. Do not force it, or fine particles will pass through and cloud the consommé.

11. Degrease. Remove all traces of fat from the surface. Strips of clean brown paper passed across the surface are effective in absorbing every last speck of fat without absorbing much consommé.
13. Adjust the seasonings.