

SPLIT PEA SOUP

Shared by Nancy Peotter

Makes about 4 qts.

(This is a double recipe for extra to put in the freezer)

1lb. dry split peas, green,
rinsed and sorted
7 c. chicken-flavored veg. broth
1½ tsp. olive oil
¼ tsp. crushed red pepper
6 cloves garlic, minced
1 lg. red onion, chopped (about 3 c.)
2 c. zucchini (either cut in julienne
strips or pulse in food blender
in water)
1 c. water
2 bay leaves
½ tsp. dried thyme leaves
2 Tbs. dried parsley
1 Tbs. Bragg Liquid Aminos
2 c. sliced baby carrots
2 to 4 oz. imitation bacon bits,
if desired

Combine peas with broth in 5-qt. saucepan. Bring to boil, lower to simmer, covered, for about an hour. (McKay's chicken broth is fairly salty; if preferred, use water or half-water/half-broth.) Heat olive oil and red pepper in a large frying pan for 1 minute. Add the next 4 ingredients and sauté over medium-high heat for 10 minutes or until veggies soften and the juices are rendered. Using a slotted spoon, remove the veggies and place in soup pot, leaving juices in frying pan. Add some imitation bacon bits, if you like them. Cook for 5 minutes. Add imitation soy-based (non-GMO label) bacon bits to soup pot, and deglaze the frying pan with 1 cup water, stirring up any browned bits from bottom. Add that to pot. Add the remaining ingredients and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the peas are tender (30 to 45 minutes) or until ready to serve. **Blender trick** — *fill about half full of water, put in zucchini pieces and "pulse" once or twice for about a second until veggies are the correct size for your soup, then do some of the carrots until they are done; both the onion and the garlic also can be chopped in chunks and pulsed.* When you drain the veggies, once they are the perfect size you want, keep that water for the 7 cups of (flavored or water) liquid you need for this basic recipe. It is now loaded with nutrients and antioxidants, and wonderful flavor. You can hand chop, if you wish. Just be careful on pulsing to just touch the switch — you do want little chunks of veggies, not mush. You'll be amazed at how fast this goes!

This is my absolute favorite, go-back-to-over-and-over-again staple, year-round. It tastes better after it sits a day or two and freezes great. Once you make the first batch, the process is really easy to repeat! *Enjoy!*