

Daily Union Article
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Title: Soups on with MyPlate

One of my favorite things about cooler weather is the satisfaction of including more soups in my family meal plans. I like these one-pot wonders for their flexibility, nutritional value, and large quantities. With three active teenage boys in my home, keeping their stomachs full with healthy and nutritional menus is an ongoing challenge, but soups are a considerable help! As you read on through this article, you will discover just how healthy and nutritious soups can be!

The United State Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service uses the MyPlate program to help people recognize the five basic food groups necessary to a daily healthy and nutritious diet.

MyPlate is a reminder to find your healthy eating style and build it throughout your lifetime. Everything you eat and drink matters. The right mix can help you be healthier now and in the future. This means:

- ✓ Focus on variety, amount, and nutrition.
- ✓ Choose foods and beverages with less saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.
- ✓ Start with small changes to build healthier eating styles.
- ✓ Support healthy eating for everyone.

The MyPlate graphic (see insert) helps you recognize that half of your plate should be filled with vegetables and fruits. On the other side you will see that you also need grains and protein. Not to be overlooked, dairy products are attached to the graphic as part of a balanced diet.

Upon closer look at the MyPlate logo, you will see that you need slightly more vegetables than fruit and slightly more grains than protein. Within the grain foods, MyPlate guidelines recommend that half of your grain sources come from whole grains such as oatmeal, whole wheat bread products, or whole grain pasta. These guidelines also recommended lean protein sources such as lean beef, chicken, or beans.

Is it any wonder that soups can provide nearly, and often, all of these food groups? Take a minute to evaluate each of the recipes below. Check off the foods groups they contain to help you see how easy it is to incorporate a large number of the five food groups in a single soup entrée. Then, identify side dishes you could add to round out the meal so that all five food groups are present:

Ground Beef Stew

Ingredients:

- 1/2 pound ground beef, or ground turkey, or venison (lean)

- 1/8t salt (optional)
- 1/8t pepper (optional)
- 1 can tomato soup, condensed (10 3/4 ounce)
- 10 3/4 us fluid ounce water (one soup can full)
- 6 carrots (medium, diced or sliced)
- 2 potatoes (medium, diced or sliced)
- 1 cup onion (diced)

Directions:

1. Brown meat. Drain fat, if any. Season lightly with salt and pepper (optional).
2. Add soup and 1 can of water to fry pan. Add vegetables.
3. Bring to a boil, then simmer, covered, about 25 minutes or until tender. Remove from heat, cover for last 10 minutes to thicken.
4. Serve. Refrigerate leftovers.

Place a check next to the food group(s) that are included in the Ground Beef Stew Recipe:

- Vegetable
- Fruit
- Grain
- Protein
- Dairy

Now, consider what (if any) food group is missing. What healthy option could you add to make this meal more balanced? List your ideas here:

Here are two more recipes to practice your MyPlate evaluation skills with:

Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

Ingredients

- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 cup diced celery
- 12 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 6 cups reduced sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup raw wild rice, rinsed and drained
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 can evaporated skim milk

Directions:

In a large cooking pot, cook and stir carrot, onion, and celery in hot olive oil until tender (about 5 minutes.) Add chicken and cook until chicken is no longer pink and beginning to brown. Add broth and wild rice. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30-45 minutes or until rice is tender. In small bowl, combine flour and softened butter

to make a smooth paste. Stir flour mixture into broth (after rice is tender). Cook and stir until soup is thickened and bubbly. Add evaporated milk. Cook and stir over medium heat until heated through. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Makes 4-6 servings.

Apple & Butternut Squash Soup

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3 large yellow onions
- 1-2 tablespoons mild curry powder
- 5 pounds butternut squash (2 large), peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 apples, peeled, cored, and quartered
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 3-4 cups water
- 2 cups unsweetened apple juice

Directions:

In a large stockpot, saute' onions and curry powder in the butter and olive oil until golden. Add squash, apples, salt, pepper, and water. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer over medium-low heat for 30-40 minutes, until squash and apples are very soft. Process the soup through a food processor, blender, or use an immersion blender until smooth. Return to pot and add juice. Soup should be lightly sweet and quite thick. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.

<http://extension.usu.edu/foodsense/recipes/soups>

Looking through the MyPlate lens when making your meals plan is an easy way to get the jump on eating a healthy balanced meal. Soups, like the ones presented here, offer you a quick and wholesome option for a one or two dish nutritious meal. For more healthy menu ideas, contact me at the Geary County K-State Research and Extension office at 785-238-4161. Until next time, keep living resourcefully!

