



Bean Zine #8

recipes and postcards

Bean Dream #15

Recipes

Yellow Borscht

Peanut-Chickpea Stew

Common-Law Soup

Lentil-Potato Soup

Bean Dream #16

Portrait Postcards

March:

April:

Carefully cut open this pocket
to release the postcards.

© 2026. Bean Zine is for sharing.
More at pearlofcivilization.net

Bean Dream #15: Soup Swap

Would you like to hear about the easiest thing I have ever helped organize in my life? It is a Soup Swap, which is an unofficial situation where participants give each other soup whenever they feel like it. There are no rules, there are no meetings, and not everyone has to swap with each other. It's casual, and yet it seems to persist. Any type or amount of soup is fine, although most of us seem to give frozen containers. Some people drop off their soup gifts; I tend to ambush people with soup when they come to my house.

I really like treating "one soup" as a unit for swapping because it obviously has no defined size or value. This creates an automatic sliding scale where more soup can flow to people who need it, without having any official tracking. There is no need to aim for exact reciprocity, and maybe it is actually good for us all to be a bit indebted to each other, to have an excuse to meet up again?

The best time to strengthen ties with friends, acquaintances and neighbours was always decades ago, but the second best time is always now. I notice that people who are currently hiding each other from secret police say that this kind of thing gave them a head start.

Yellow Borscht

Turns out borscht comes in quite a few colours! So far yellow is my favourite. For a main course I serve this with perogies and sausage.

1T olive oil or butter
2t kosher salt
1 yellow onion, diced
2 celery stalks, sliced
4 cloves garlic, sliced
3 golden beets, quartered and then sliced
2 carrots, sliced
1/4 green or savoy cabbage, shredded or chopped
2C cooked cannellini beans
8C vegetable or chicken stock
2T dried dill
juice of 1/2 lemon

1. In a large pot, heat the oil or butter over medium-high heat. Saute the onion with 1t salt until fragrant, then add the garlic. Cook the vegetables until translucent.
2. Add the beets, carrots, cabbage, beans, dill, stock, and remaining 1t salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Cook 10-15 minutes until root vegetables are tender.
3. Add the lemon slowly until it is as tart and lemony as you enjoy.
4. Serve, optionally with a dollop of sour cream.

Carefully cut open this pocket
to release the postcards.

Bean Dream #16: Soups For The Future

These days I buy more things in bulk when possible, for lots of reasons that you could probably guess. Saving money by stocking up when things are on sale, insurance against supply disruptions, supporting local seasonal harvests, etc. With fresh produce this can present a challenge of what to do with it before it goes bad.

Consequently I have been reconnecting with the extremely basic home economics skill of freezing batches of things to use as soup ingredients. In case you, too, have been out of touch with this practice, here are a few tips and notes.

- Whenever I have too much of a vegetable or it is about to go bad, I chop it up and freeze it. Easy!
- I know certain vegetables benefit from blanching before freezing, but for soup I find it is worth tossing things in the freezer even if you don't have time to blanch them first.
- Many frozen veggies have a texture that could be unappealing in other contexts, but in a soup they are lovely. E.g., frozen cilantro, chili peppers, cabbage... I have yet to find a veggie that can't be frozen for soup.
- I store each veggie separately for ease, but if I later have, say, more celery to freeze, I will usually add it to the existing package.
- Small amounts like half a tomato could go into the stock-making supplies instead (see Bean Zine #2!)

Peanut-Chickpea Stew

A stew for when you need something profoundly filling without being heavy. This started as a much appreciated meal train delivery-- thanks to James and Trudi for the original!

- 1/4C uncooked brown rice
- 8C chicken stock
- optional: 1kg boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 6 cloves garlic
- 2t kosher salt
- 1C natural peanut butter
- 1/4C apple cider vinegar
- 2C cooked chickpeas (or more, if not using chicken)
- 1-2 bunches kale or other greens, trimmed and chopped

1. In a large pot, combine rice, 6C stock, garlic, chicken, and 1t salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 30 min.
2. In a food processor, combine peanut butter, vinegar, and the remaining 2C stock. Blend.
3. Add peanut butter mixture to the pot, along with chickpeas, greens, and remaining 1t salt. Return to a simmer, and cook 5 min until greens are tender. Adjust salt and vinegar to taste.
4. Serve with roast yams and sambal oelek.

Common-Law Soup

Did you know that the musical Wicked was not adapted directly from the book, but instead from a drunken recap of the book by the playwright's friend? This recipe has a similar relationship to Italian Wedding Soup.

olive oil
1 yellow onion
2 stalks celery
2 bay leaves
2t kosher salt
6 cloves garlic
optional: 1 red bell pepper, in 1cm dice
1t ground fennel seed
2t dried rosemary
8C chicken or vegetable stock
3C diced tomatoes, or 1 28oz can
4C cooked cannellini beans, or 2 19oz cans
500g Italian sausage meat without casings
1C small dried pasta (e.g., pastini, orzo, mini shells...)

1. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Saute the onion, celery, and bay leaves with 1t salt until fragrant, then add the garlic and red pepper. Cook 2-3 more minutes.
2. Add the fennel, rosemary, stock, tomatoes, beans, and remaining 1t salt. Bring to a boil.
3. Meanwhile, roll the sausage meat into tiny meatballs about 1.5cm in diameter. Add to the soup, return to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes.
4. Add pasta and simmer until cooked.

Lentil and Potato Soup

I love putting potatoes in lemony soups, because they develop the toothsome texture of Greek lemon potatoes.

1T olive oil or butter
1 yellow onion, diced
2t salt
8 cloves garlic, minced
2t ground cumin
1t ground coriander
1/4t ground cinnamon
1/4t ground black pepper
2 carrots, chopped
2 potatoes, in 1cm dice
2C dry green lentils, picked over
8C vegetable or chicken stock
juice of 2 lemons
optional: 2C cooked black beans
1C chopped parsley
1 bunch spinach or chard, chopped

1. In a large pot, heat the oil or butter over medium-high heat. Add the onions and 1t salt, and saute until fragrant. Add the garlic, cumin, coriander, cinnamon, and black pepper, and saute until onions are translucent.
3. Add carrots, potatoes, lentils, stock, remaining 1t salt, lemon juice, and beans if using. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes or until vegetables and lentils are fully cooked.
4. Stir in parsley and spinach and cook until just wilted.