

SOUPS FOR HOT WEATHER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "COMMON-SENSE COOKERY," &c.



CAN fully understand some persons saying, "What! hot soups this weather? Why, that would be as bad as oysters!" This depends very much upon what soup it is. I fully admit that a thick mock-turtle, especially if made from pig's head, would be as unsuitable as pork sausages or any other hot weather abomination; but a well-flavoured white soup is, I think,

as nice a commencement to a dinner in very hot weather as anything, if the soup is properly made, and some tempting fried bread is served with it.

I will first describe how to make a few varieties of white soup, and then will explain how to make a clear soup, that can be served *iced*, which, when the weather is really very dreadful, will make an agreeable change.

White soups may generally be described as good white stock, mixed with boiling milk, and flavoured with various vegetables, such as celery, cauliflower, artichokes, vegetable marrow, cabbage, potato, &c. There are also many other vegetable soups suitable for summer made without milk, such as carrot, asparagus, green-pea, &c.

In order to make every kind of white soup, it is necessary to have some good stock made from veal bones. Bones will do just as well as knuckle of veal. As the stock need not be clear, and as bones are cheaper, they are, of course, to be preferred. Take, say, a couple of pounds of veal bones, chop them up, and put them in a saucepan or stock-pot, with a quart of cold water, an onion, a few sticks of celery (if they can be obtained), and a few sprigs of parsley; a small carrot and turnip can also be added, but are not absolutely necessary. Next, if possible, get a piece of raw ham, or a ham-bone, or a lean bacon-bone. This is a very great improvement to all white soups. These bones should be put on very early in the morning, so as they can stew gently for five or six hours. After they have stewed for this time, the stock should be strained off, and allowed to boil away till the whole quart of stock is reduced, by boiling, to about half a pint. This reducing may, to some, seem extravagant; but I will explain the reason, which is really an economical one. To make what may be called high-class white soup, cream is generally ordered—a pint of boiling cream being added to, say, a quart or more of good stock—but by reducing a quart of stock to half a pint we get good soup with-

out cream, equal almost to that which is made with cream.

Having reduced this quart of stock to half a pint, next take a quart of good milk, or nearly a quart, and put it on the fire to boil, adding, if possible, two dried bay-leaves, or one fresh, to boil in it; as soon as it begins to boil, which can be told by the bubbles rising, and then the white foam, take it off the fire, and add this milk to the reduced stock. Take out, of course, the bay-leaves. Season this white soup with a little pepper and salt, and it will be very nice as it is, without any vegetables. It can be thickened with a little butter and flour (white roux) mixed together, and baked in the oven a short time to take the rawness off the flour. When vegetables are added, thickening is not always necessary, as the vegetables generally are sufficient in themselves to thicken the soup.

To, make cauliflower soup, proceed as above, with the addition of getting a young cauliflower, and boiling it for about ten minutes in salt and water in the ordinary way. Then take it out and drain it, and cut off the white part, and pick out a number of the best little white sprigs of cauliflower, in shape like a tiny bouquet of flowers, and put them aside to add to the soup after it is finished. Next trim away the green part, and put all the rest of the stalk, white part, &c., into the stock to boil till it is perfectly tender. When this is tender and the stock sufficiently reduced, rub it all through a wire sieve, and then add the boiled milk. The soup will now be probably thick enough. Then add the little sprigs of cauliflower, and bring the soup to a boil; this will be sufficient to make them tender, as they were not fully boiled at first, and the soup can then be served with the fried bread.

In making vegetable marrow soup, the vegetable marrow must be first peeled and cut into quarters, and all the pips removed. These quarters can now be boiled in the stock, and the whole boiled away till it is a pulp. Take care, however, you do not boil it away till it burns. Then rub the pulp through a wire sieve, and add the boiled milk as before.

Potato soup is made as above, with the addition of sufficient cooked potatoes being rubbed through a wire sieve to make the soup thick. The thickness of white soup should be about that of double cream. A very great improvement to potato soup is to serve a few very small new potatoes, not much bigger than large marbles, whole in the soup.

Perhaps the nicest of all white soups is celery soup, but, unfortunately, celery is not easily got in very hot weather. Plenty of celery must be boiled in the stock. The green part should be removed first, and the celery, when tender, should be rubbed through the wire sieve, sufficient celery being sent through to make the soup thick without any thickening being added afterwards.

Palestine soup is made in just the same way as vegetable marrow soup, the chief point being to use

sufficient Jerusalem artichokes to make the soup thick without having recourse to other means.

In all the above soups I have mentioned, I suggested that the stock should be strained off. It is an open point, however, dependent on the taste of the eater, whether or not an onion boiled in the stock may not also be rubbed through the wire sieve with the vegetables. When the flavour of onion is liked, this should be done. It imparts a richness to the soup, besides rendering it more nourishing. On the other hand, it should be remembered that even a slight flavour of onion is strongly objected to by many. There are persons who become absolutely ill after taking onions; when, therefore, the soup is intended for those whose tastes we do not know, it is best not to rub the onion through the sieve.

With regard to potato soup, I have recommended stock made from veal bones, but for this nourishing and much-neglected soup almost any stock will do. Like pea soup, it can be made from the liquor in which a piece of bacon has been boiled; or, in other words, potato soup can be made from greasy stock. Of course it is not so nice, nor so suitable for hot weather; still, the point should be borne in mind. Potato soup is an admirable soup for children, being a mixture of potatoes, milk, and a little meat, or rather, juice of meat.

There is one more addition to all white soups that can be made, viz., a little nutmeg. This, however, requires great care in adding, as too much will spoil the soup; and it is by no means an easy matter to impress the "good plain cook" with the fact of how long a way a little nutmeg goes. The nutmeg should flavour the soup to a certain extent, and yet you should not be able to tell that there is any nutmeg in it. A very good expression is "a suspicion of nutmeg." If you rub a used nutmeg—*i.e.*, one that is cut into, and fits the grater, so to speak—twice across the grater, it will, as a rule, be ample to impart flavour to a quart of soup. It is safest to grate the nutmeg on a spoon, so that if too much falls it can be taken out.

One essential to all white soups is fried bread. The bread, which should be cut from a close loaf free from holes, should be stale, and must be cut into very small dice. The fat or lard in which it is fried should be clean, and more than deep enough to cover the bread. The very best thing in which to fry bread is a small copper tinned saucepan, and a little wire basket made to fit. The worst of a frying-pan is that it requires such a large quantity of fat. A very little ingenuity will enable you to make a wire basket yourself that will just fit inside a little saucepan. A small copper saucepan lined with tin, one about five inches in diameter, will be found very useful in every household. The fat should be almost smoking hot. The bread should be put in the basket, and the basket plunged into the hot fat; about thirty seconds will fry the bread. As soon as it gets a light brown, take it out, as it will turn a darker colour after it has been removed from the fat; throw the bread first on to a hot cloth,

and then place it on some coarse paper in front of the fire, or in the oven, to drain the grease from it. Do not let the fried bread get cold suddenly, or it will taste greasy.

The fried bread, which should be of a rich golden brown colour, should be handed round with the soup, and never served in it.

With potato soup a little dried mint may be served, like pea soup. Some think this a great improvement. I think a tea-spoonful of finely-chopped parsley added to the soup, and allowed to boil in it for about a minute, better than dried mint served with it.

An agreeable change, and probably to many a novelty, in very hot weather, is to have the soup iced instead of hot. The soup should, of course, be clear and perfectly bright, and also have some mixed vegetables in it. A small tin of Macedoines is as good as anything, or if fresh vegetables can be obtained easily, have some carrot, turnip, green-peas, and, if possible, a few asparagus tops and a few fresh green tarragon leaves cut into thin strips. The carrot and turnip must be cut up into small dice or thin strips, the whole thrown into fast-boiling water, to preserve their colour, and boiled, and then added to the soup.

The first point is to get some perfectly bright stock; a little veal will be sufficient. It must be placed in some cold water at starting, with an onion, in which six cloves have been stuck, a carrot, a turnip, some sticks of celery, and some sprigs of parsley. Suppose we have one pound of veal, we should want a quart of water, and let it stew gently for two hours. Some cayenne pepper and salt may be allowed to boil with it. This should then all be strained off, every particle of fat removed, and if not quite bright, cleared by beating a white of egg up in a little cold water, adding this to the soup after it is strained, and boiling it for five or ten minutes, then straining the whole through a jelly-bag. As the soup is required quite cold, it must not be too strong, or it will be a jelly. Therefore, the veal must not stew too long. Of course, after straining off the first lot of soup some more water should be added to the veal and vegetables, and they should be put on the fire again to make more stock. The soup is now clear, but poor both in flavour and colour. This can be remedied by adding some extract of meat. Add to a quart of soup a brimming tea-spoonful, or even more.

Make the soup a rich, bright, golden-brown colour, like the fried bread; boil the already-cooked vegetables in the soup for a few minutes, and let the soup get cold. Taste it first, to see if it requires a little more pepper or salt. When it is quite cold put it in a basin, and put the basin in the soup-tureen, with some rough ice round it outside, and let it stand so for half an hour before dinner.

The soup will taste very good, as though not a jelly, it will not be thin, owing to the jelly from the veal. The extract of meat can be added without making it in the least degree thicker when cold, as Liebig's extract does not contain gelatine.

