

GERMANY



Crock-Pot Potato Soup

Perfect for a Sunday supper, you can throw everything into a Crock-Pot and let it cook while you do other things. *This recipe is in honor of my brother-in-law, Kurt Roeske.*

INGREDIENTS **SERVES 4-6**

1	medium onion, chopped
2	medium leeks, white part only, sliced
4	medium carrots, chopped
6	medium potatoes, diced
4 c.	vegetable stock
1½ c.	water
1	medium bay leaf
½ t.	salt
¼ t.	nutmeg
½ c.	sour cream, optional

PREPARATION

1. Chop or dice all of the vegetables and place them in the Crock-Pot. Cover with vegetable stock and water.
2. Stir in the bay leaf, salt, and nutmeg.
3. Cover and cook on low heat setting for 8 to 10 hours, or on high heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
4. Remove the bay leaf. Mash mixture in the Crock-Pot with a potato masher.
5. Stir in the sour cream if desired.

IF YOU GO TO GERMANY

With so many castles, you won't have to travel very far to find one to visit. Tucked away in the mountains, often overlooking pristine lakes or rivers, many are open to the public. Some are still family owned, steeped in tradition, and well worth a visit. Germany has an abundance of hiking trails, but there is a good chance you'll also do plenty of walking in the villages and cities as you take in the sights. If you take a cruise on the Rhine River, look for castles you might not notice from the roadway.



JAMAICA



Sweet Mango Soup

With the convenience of frozen mangoes, you can make this spectacular dessert soup during any season of the year. Whether you enjoy it on a hot summer day or a cold winter night, this sweet treat feels like a vacation.

INGREDIENTS **SERVES 4–6**

4 c.	frozen mangoes, thawed
1 c.	milk
1 c.	plain yogurt
1 c.	coconut milk, unsweetened
3 T.	sugar

GARNISH

2 medium bananas, or substitute other fruit
6 to 8 mint leaves, optional

PREPARATION

1. Puree the mangoes and milk in a food processor or blender.
2. Add the yogurt, coconut milk, and sugar, processing until smooth.
3. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
4. Ladle into serving bowls.
5. Garnish with sliced bananas and a mint leaf.

VARIATIONS

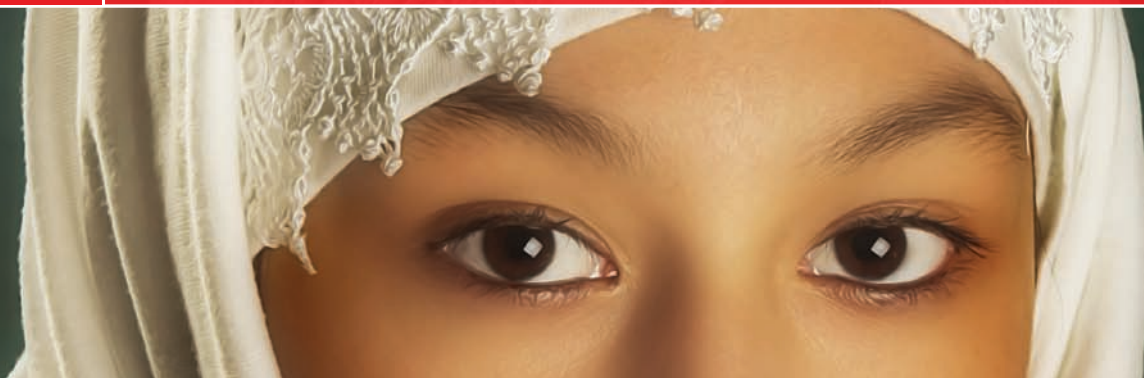
You can add ½ t. of fresh grated ginger, or you can omit the sugar and make this a spicy appetizer soup with the addition of a small, finely chopped jalapeño pepper.

IF YOU GO TO JAMAICA

The primary language of Jamaica is English, but it has a distinctive rhythm and charming quality. Conversations also include a sprinkling of Creole, which is a combination of English and African languages. Meals are often served buffet style. Visitors should try as many dishes as possible to demonstrate a gracious spirit. Go easy though, because the spicy heat in some of the items might take you by surprise. It is considered polite to finish everything on your plate. Always use the appropriate greeting for the time of day, such as “good morning,” “good afternoon,” or “good evening.” Try to take at least one boat ride—along the coast, on one of the scenic rivers, or on a subterranean lake to a pirate’s cave.



MOROCCO



Carrot Soup With Cilantro Drizzle

This delicious combination of carrots and spices may tempt you to refill your bowl for a second serving. If you are short on time, prepare this soup the day before you intend to serve it. It can be served just as it is, but the Cilantro Drizzle transforms it into something spectacular.

INGREDIENTS **SERVES 4-6**

1 T.	olive oil
1	small onion, chopped
1	medium leek, white part only, sliced in thin rounds
1 clove	garlic, minced
2 t.	fresh ginger, grated
7	large carrots, sliced thin
¼ t.	turmeric
½ t.	cumin
½ t.	paprika
4 c.	water or vegetable stock
	salt to taste

Cilantro Drizzle Puree these ingredients in a blender until smooth. Set aside.

1 c.	fresh cilantro leaves
1 clove	garlic, minced
¼ t.	cumin
¼ t.	paprika

3 T.	olive oil
3 T.	lemon juice

PREPARATION

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and sauté the onion for 4 minutes. Add the leek, garlic, ginger, and 2 T. of water or vegetable broth. Cook 4 minutes until the onion and leek are tender.
2. Stir in the carrots, turmeric, cumin, paprika, and water or stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 35 minutes or until carrots are very soft. Remove from burner and let cool for 10 minutes.
3. Puree the soup in a blender until smooth. Return to saucepan and slowly reheat.
4. Ladle the soup into bowls. Lightly swirl a spoonful of Cilantro Drizzle over each serving.

IF YOU GO TO MOROCCO

If you are invited to a Moroccan home, take along a gift of pastries, dates, or nuts for the hosts. When there is a large group of people at a social function, first greet those on your right, followed by those on your left.



Curried Lentil Stew

Add this delicious curry to your repertoire of lentil recipes. The secret to this savory stew is the coconut milk and the aromatic spices. *This recipe is in honor of P. Perumal Dhanaraja.*

INGREDIENTS **SERVES 4-6**

1 c.	lentils, uncooked
1 T.	oil
1	medium onion, diced
2 cloves	garlic, minced
1 t.	curry powder
1 t.	chili powder (add more if you like it spicy hot)
½ t.	coriander
2 c.	coconut milk
2 c.	milk
	salt to taste

PREPARATION

1. Wash and soak the lentils in water for at least 1 hour.
2. In a large pan, heat the oil and sauté the onion, garlic, and curry powder until onion is soft.
3. Rinse and drain the lentils and add to the pan.
4. Add the chili powder, coriander, coconut milk, and milk.
5. Bring to a boil, then simmer on low until lentils are soft. Add salt to taste.
6. Serve alone or over rice.

IF YOU GO TO SRI LANKA

If you are invited to dinner at a specified time, you should plan to be on time even though it may be several hours before the food arrives. (You might need to eat something before you go.) Since most of the socializing takes place before the meal is served, you can expect to leave within half an hour after the meal ends. While in Sri Lanka, plan to visit the Pinnawela Elephant Orphanage near Kegalle. Originally established to care for injured or orphaned elephants found in the wild, it is now home to about 70 elephants. If you visit during feeding time, you can offer sugar cane and bananas to the calves. You can also accompany the entire herd to the nearby river and watch the elephants enjoy their daily baths.



RUSSIA



Mushroom-Barley Soup

One can only guess how many versions of mushroom-barley soup exist. Barley adds substance to soup that seems to contribute to a sense of satisfaction and contentment after the first bowl. *This recipe is in honor of Mikhail and Lyudmila Kulakov.*

INGREDIENTS **SERVES 8-10**

3 T.	margarine or butter
4 c.	white mushrooms, sliced
2	medium leeks, white part only, halved and sliced
1	large onion, chopped
3 T.	parsley, chopped
4½ c.	water
2 or 3	bouillon cubes
½ c.	barley, uncooked
3	medium carrots, peeled and diced
2	stalks celery, diced
2 c.	milk
½ t.	salt

PREPARATION

1. In a medium pan, melt the margarine and sauté the mushrooms, leeks, and onion for 5 to 8 minutes or until tender. Add the parsley and set aside.
2. In a large, heavy pan, bring the water, bouillon cubes, and barley to a boil.

3. Add the carrots and celery and bring back to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about 45 minutes, or until the barley is tender.
4. Add the mushroom mixture and milk. Heat thoroughly.
5. Season with salt and serve.

Note: If you prefer a thicker soup, combine ½ c. of the milk while it is still cold with ¼ c. of flour. Gradually stir into soup. Bring to a low boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes or until thickened.

IF YOU GO TO RUSSIA

Russian culture is defined by the way people relate to their families. Great respect is given to *babushkas*, the elderly matriarchs who usually live with their children and often provide child care for the younger generations. If you visit a Russian home, it is almost mandatory that you bring a gift. They may protest when it is offered, but that is part of the protocol before it is accepted. Smiles are reserved for things that they find amusing or when greeting close friends. Smiling at strangers in public is considered suspicious.