

*Classic
Noyas
for
the 21st century*



Soup is a symbol of survival, a food across cultures and throughout history that is most often born of some combination of deep hunger, resourcefulness, and resilience. Mine, despite being vegan, creative and left in jars on my friends' porches during Seattle's rainy winter, share the same spirit of survival at their core.

My craving for soup struck a few years ago when I was in a desperate place. I had just had brain surgery to remove a tumor I had only found out about two weeks prior and was eating more takeout than I'd ever had in my life. I needed nourishment, soulful food, and the fact that I physically couldn't pull my pots from my kitchen cabinets and cook made me feel even more scared and alone. I had eaten a lunch of anonymous grain salad from our local grocer's deli, feeling pitiful, before going to the doctor's appointment where I learned that my tumor had been the most aggressive brain cancer possible and I had a year to live.

All I could do was write. Being very new to Seattle at the time with only a few friends and our network of loved ones scattered across the country and abroad, I clung to an online journal I was writing at the time as my only lifeline. I wrote constantly because I still could, in spite of what the doctors told me might happen as a result of the surgery along the motor cortex of my brain. It was on that journal, in the only place that carried me away from being a sick mom of two kids and a powerless cook, that I sounded the call for homemade soup. My husband set a cooler outside, the only connection other than my keyboard I had to the world beyond our house.

Jars appeared immediately, jumbled into the cooler without space to spare. Mason jars, as well as reused Costco-sized ones I recognized for peanut butter or pasta sauce. Plastic tubs of soup, stacked like bricks. I even found a sturdy resealable bag or two in there once. Sometimes they appeared with notes, sometimes not, but the message was clear anyway, as if stirred into the soup itself: of strength, of love, of hope.

I would sit down to a warm bowl of soup for lunch. As I filled the spoon with broth, I soaked in its details: its flavor, of course, but also the cuts of the vegetables that reminded me of the humanity that brought it to my bowl. These soups had stories, emotions even, and I drank them in. They kept me company

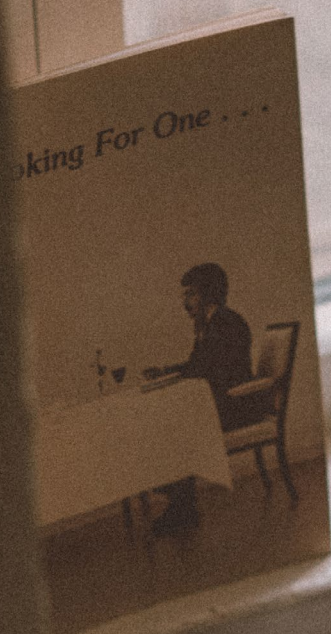
until I didn't feel weak anymore and wanted to cook again, to live fearlessly again.

I survived to the confusion of my doctors, to a healthier body and spirit than ever. I was confused, too, not knowing how to reacclimate to any kind of normal life, feeling scared and alone again. I decided to do what I'd done up to that point, to follow my instinct and do what felt joyful and put to good use the gift of a day. I immediately thought about making soup for the people who made soup for me. Soup that celebrated the kind of anti-inflammatory, healthful and wholesome way I began cooking for myself when I got back in the kitchen.

That's how I started my soup club – a few emails to some dear new friends—and suddenly I was making around sixty quarts of soup every week without repeats. The challenge was impressive, ambitious, and redolent of the old me. I knew I had stumbled onto something special when my friends started texting me selfies they took with their soup bowls, painting dreamy portraits of their soup lunches and dinners, writing poetry about it. They developed rituals, like I had, around the soup to share with family and friends.

So I made a cookbook, not wanting to have it processed by editors or fit into someone else's perspective about what a book about soup should be. I traded soup for artwork—photography, poetry and paintings – and attempted to harness the experience of this community, my club, and what soup looks and feels like to me. I learned design software and begged everyone I knew from my career for advice to make the book; the bound pages came together with a similar earnest focus and collaboration from which the club began.

The gift of soup, sounding a call into a void from a tender place, changed my life. It cracked open my story, sharing it with everyone I knew, and gave me hope when my doctors couldn't. Soup saved me twice: it first nourished my body, and then my creativity and artist spirit. It showed me the boundaries of what I thought was possible. When I make my recipes, these souvenirs of my experience that hold similar resilience to every cook who has ever tossed together a soup of their own, even my soup-making itself has shifted to a ritualized practice of gratitude. As with the jars that were left on my doorstep years ago, stirred into my soup is strength, love and hope.



Cream of mushroom soup

Makes about 8 bowlfuls (about 2 ½ quarts)

Among my soup lady sleight-of-hand, I wanted the challenge of making a delicious creamy soup. This is my take on the classic Warhol canned variety, which I adore topped with a pinch of dressed baby arugula leaves in spring.

1 oz. dried porcini mushrooms,
chopped or broken into small pieces
(about ¾ cup)

⅓ cup nutritional yeast
kosher salt

½ cup gluten-free rolled oats

¼ cup olive oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
freshly ground black pepper

1 lb. cremini mushrooms, trimmed of
dry stems, quartered (about 4 cups)

8 oz. oyster mushrooms, trimmed of
dry stems, roughly chopped (about
3 cups)

8 oz. shiitake mushrooms, trimmed of
dry stems, roughly chopped (about
3 cups)

2 sprigs fresh rosemary

2 fresh or dried bay leaves

½ cup well-stirred tahini

2 tsp. vegan worcestershire

1 tbsp. sherry or cider vinegar, plus
more to taste

1 In a blender jar, combine dried mushrooms, yeast, and 1 tablespoon salt; process until finely ground (about 1 minute). Transfer to a bowl and set aside; reserve blender jar. Heat a large, heavy pot over medium heat until hot (without oil); add oats. Roast oats until golden brown and fragrant (about 3 minutes). Transfer to a bowl and set aside (reserve pot).

2 Add oil to reserved pot and return to medium heat until hot; add onion and garlic. Season generously with salt and pepper (about 1 tsp. salt and ½ tsp. pepper). Cook, stirring often, until onion is tender but not browned (about 8 minutes). Stir in fresh mushrooms; cook until they begin to release their liquid (about 5 minutes). Stir in reserved mushroom salt, rosemary, bay leaves, and 6 cups (1 ½ qt.) water. Cover and bring to a boil.

3 Simmer soup, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until mushrooms are just tender (about 10 minutes). Remove 2 cups mushroom broth from soup; transfer to reserved blender jar with reserved toasted oats, tahini, and Worcestershire; blend until smooth (about 1 minute). Scrape mixture back into soup. Simmer soup, stirring, until broth is smooth and thick, and mushrooms are fully cooked (5 minutes). Stir in vinegar. Season soup with additional salt and vinegar to taste. Remove rosemary sprigs and bay leaves before serving.



nearly retro cabbage soup

Makes about 8 bowlfuls (about 2 1/2 qt.)

This soup is my take on the midcentury fad diet, my way of turning it inside out to transform body shame into flavor and comfort.

- 1/2 cup coconut oil
- 1 medium head green cabbage, quartered (core intact)
- kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 celery stalks, sliced 1/2-inch-thick
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 (1-inch) piece ginger, peeled and chopped
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 8 oz. brussels sprouts, halved (or quartered if large)
- 1 cup dried butter beans, soaked overnight
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes in juice
- 1 tbsp. coconut aminos, plus more to taste
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice, plus more to taste

3 Reduce heat to slowly simmer soup, covered and without stirring, until cabbage and beans are tender (about 1 hour). Stir in coconut aminos and lemon juice. Season soup with salt, coconut aminos, and lemon juice to taste.

1 Heat oil in a large, heavy pot over high heat until very hot (it will smoke). Sear cabbage in batches until it's a deep caramel color on both sides (about 10 minutes total). Transfer cabbage to a cutting board to cool 5 minutes; season generously with salt and pepper (about 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper). Reserve oil and pan.

2 While cabbage cools, reduce heat to medium-low and add onion, celery, garlic, and ginger to pot; season generously with salt (about 1 tsp.). Cook, stirring often, until vegetables have softened (about 10 minutes). While vegetables cook, slice away core of cabbage and cut into 2-inch pieces. Stir tomato paste into pot with vegetables. Add carrots, Brussels sprouts, beans, tomatoes, reserved cabbage, and 6 cups (1 1/2 qt.) water; season

generously with salt (about 2 tsp.). Cover and bring to a boil.

make your own veg broth

While my recipes in "Soup Club" purposely do not call for broth or stock and build their flavor through water alone, it doesn't mean you can't make broth from their vegetable trimmings! (Risotto, anyone?) Here are guidelines for how I make mine, though the possibilities are endless: toss in a small handful of dried mushrooms or sliced ginger, say, and you have something new entirely.

- 10 to 12 cups vegetable trimmings (such as peelings and tops from carrots, stem ends from onions, root bases of celery, leek greens)
- 4 bay leaves
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed (no need to remove papers)
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- a few sprigs of sturdy, fresh herbs: rosemary or thyme

Combine all ingredients in a stock pot and cover with water. Bring water to a boil; reduce heat to simmer. Simmer broth slowly until fragrant and rich in color, 5 to 6 hours. Set a large bowl in another large bowl filled with ice water; strain broth into inner bowl to chill broth. (Compost solids.) Transfer chilled broth to storage containers and seal. Refrigerate up to 1 week or freeze up to 3 months.



broccoli & rice soup

Makes about 8 bowlfuls (about 3 quarts)

Broccoli and cheese are a classic pair based in retro casseroles adored by generations for their warmth and family-friendly appeal. I prefer to bring out the broccoli flavor rather than hide it under cheese! Look for full heads of broccoli with long stalks, to be peeled and “riced” and kept out of the compost.

- 1 large bunch broccoli with long stalks (about 1 lb.)
- 1/2 cup mung beans
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 bunch scallions (both whites and greens), chopped
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast
- 1 large bunch baby broccoli, sliced into 1-inch pieces (about 5 cups)
- 1/2 cup short-grain brown rice
- 1/4 cup cilantro leaves, chopped
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice, plus more to taste

1 Cut broccoli to separate stalks from crowns; peel outer, rough layer from stalks with a vegetable peeler and roughly chop. Break and cut broccoli crowns into large florets, about 2 to 3 inches at the widest part. (You should have about 4 cups broccoli florets and 1 to 2 cups chopped broccoli stalks.)

2 Heat a large, heavy pot over medium heat until hot (without oil); add beans. Roast beans, stirring until evenly golden brown (about 5 minutes). Transfer beans to a parchment-lined baking sheet in a single layer; allow to rest until cool to the touch (about 3 minutes). Use parchment to funnel beans into a spice grinder or blender; process until finely ground (you should have 1/2 cup ground beans). Heat oil in reserved pot over medium heat until hot; add onion and coriander. Season generously with salt and pepper (about 1 tsp. salt and 1/2 tsp. pepper). Cook, stirring often, until onion is tender but not browned (about 10 minutes). Stir in ground beans, reserved broccoli florets and chopped broccoli stalks, scallions, yeast, baby broccoli, rice, and 8 cups (2 qt.) water. Season very generously with salt (about 2 tsp.). Cover and bring to a boil.

3 Reduce heat to slowly simmer soup, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until rice is tender (about 30 minutes). Stir in cilantro and lemon juice. Season soup with additional salt and lemon juice to taste.

*Recipes excerpted from Caroline's most recent cookbook, **Soup Club**, which was reprinted by Andrews McMeel and re-released on October 19, 2021.*