

Always New, Always Fresh

—Aniela Gregorek



You may remember from my blog post, "[One Burner](#)," how important it is to simplify your cooking routine so you don't feel overwhelmed. Every day Jerzy and I cook soup for lunch or dinner—always fresh, always simple. You don't need a recipe; instead cooking soup, for us, is a strategy. When we teach individuals or classes, I always let people know that we'll be making "soup you will never eat again." I love to see the expressions on their faces—dismay, confusion, even fear.

The phrase is a quote from our client Landon's daughter. When Landon learned our soup-preparation method she gave her family soup almost every night. But her daughter wanted to know what she was eating; she was used to the typical fare: minestrone soup, chicken noodle, white bean, split pea, tortilla, etc. Landon didn't have names for the new soups she was creating, so her daughter, who liked predictability, finally made peace with the idea by saying "tonight we're having soup we will never eat again!" She and her daughter loved the idea of a new soup that can never be repeated. And you can make it easily, too.

SWEET CORN SOUP



BEFORE



AFTER

Cooking doesn't have to be stressful and you often don't need to rely on cookbooks or special recipes. By following the principles I've outlined below, you can make easy, fresh, delicious soups from whatever you have in the refrigerator. It can be as simple as two ingredients. For example, last Tuesday it was Jerzy's turn to cook since I took our daughter to gymnastics. On the way home we always call Jerzy to ask what's for dinner and Natalie shouts "Potatoes!" because that's Jerzy's favorite food. He can eat them in any form: fried, mashed, boiled, baked....and distilled. (He likes his vodka too.) That night Jerzy just laughed, so we didn't know what we'd find on the table when we arrived.

POTATOE LEEK SOUP



BEFORE



AFTER

A mouth-watering smell greeted us when we walked in the door. And there was soup steaming on the table but it only had two ingredients: potatoes (of course!) and sweet Hawaiian onions. Yet, it was delicious!

ENGLISH PEA WITH MINT



BEFORE



AFTER

Below you will find a master plan that will liberate you from worrying about what to fix for meals. First, the details:

Four basic anti-inflammatory broth ingredients (50%):

Carrots
Celery
Onion
Parsley

Possible potent anti-inflammatory flavor enhancers:

Garlic
Ginger
Lemon or Lime

One flavoring anti-inflammatory vegetable (50%):

Asparagus
Beets
Bok choy
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Cabbage
Carrot
Celery root
Eggplant
Fennel
Kale
Leek
Mushroom
Pepper
Spinach
Squash
Tomato
Zucchini

BEET SOUP WITH GREEK YOGURT



AFTER

OR two flavoring anti-inflammatory vegetables (25% each):

Asparagus and leek
Beets and porcini mushroom
Broccoli and tomato
Carrot and fennel
Celery root and green apple
Cauliflower and kale
Eggplant and tomato
Mushroom and zucchini
Pepper and tomato
Spinach and mushroom
Tomato and cabbage

These pairs complement each other well.

SQUASH GREEN APPLE SOUP



BEFORE



AFTER

Optional added proteins:

Any animal protein (meat, fish or seafood)

Any plant-based protein (grains, beans; corn; potatoes; seeds or nuts; avocado)

Greek yogurt

There are two main problems with soups available in stores. First, these soups have ingredients that many people would prefer not to consume or maybe cannot consume, due to food allergies. Second, these soups are not fresh; they contain preservatives to maintain shelf life.

One major advantage of making your own soup is that you consume fresh vegetables in sufficient quantities, which most people do not do. This is a high-volume dish with a low number of calories, leaving you satisfied and feeling full.

MUSHROOM MEDLEY SOUP



BEFORE



AFTER

These soups are anti-inflammatory thanks to the ingredients. Carrots, onions, celery, parsley and leeks are all recognized as anti-inflammatory in varying degrees. The other ingredients, including high-protein index vegetables, such as asparagus, beet greens, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, cauliflower, kale, snap peas, spinach and Swiss chard (kale and spinach are also highly anti-inflammatory). You can add flavor with fresh or dried herbs and other seasonings, purchased or grown in a window box. Good herbs include basil, chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel, garlic, ginger, marjoram, oregano, rosemary, sage, tarragon and thyme. Spices include caraway, cardamom, cayenne pepper, chili, coriander, cumin, curry, nutmeg, paprika and turmeric.

Begin with a pressure cooker that is one-quarter filled with water. (If the water is heated, the process will be faster.) By the way, don't be intimidated by pressure cookers. All our clients use them and we've had our Duromatic for over twenty years. They make a great investment.

Next, place the first group of vegetables – cleaned and cut roughly – into the cooker, filling it half way. Note that you don't even have to peel them if they're organic.

Then, add one vegetable from the second group, which will give the soup its name. For this demonstration, we will make asparagus soup. Add seasoning to your taste. I encourage you to use fresh herbs, such as basil or garlic greens.

Cooking time will vary depending on the ingredients and volume. (For pressure cookers, follow the instructions.)

After the ingredients are cooked, you can either allow the soup to cool down by gradually or by filling the sink with cold water and placing the pot into the water, so that it is submerged to the halfway point, which will speed up the process.

You can transfer the contents into a Vitamix, which you can use to create creamy base soup. Without the cream, it's quick, tasty and healthy.

For a complete meal, you can add into individual bowls, just before serving, raw avocado or Greek yogurt for a healthy fat component.

CELERIAC AND GREEN APPLE SOUP



BEFORE



AFTER

Pressure

by Aniela Gregorek

Cooker. I fear it at first, but this time
I promise we'll do it your way, in spite
of my joy when cooking the old-fashioned way.

Life. To take off the pressure, you said,
fast and easy, that's what you're looking for
in our full of worry schedules.

It's an ordinary pot, but it frightens me
with its multipart lid. So much to understand,
it comes with instructions, so I think,
it's hard to mess it up.

Crayon drawings on the kitchen wall. Children.

Loving Without Spoiling. I wish

I would follow the book's principles.

It's hard to read your face,
eyes focused on slicing the vegetables

I hand you. I peel, you cut.

The cabinets are opened where you stand,

you don't even notice.

I am afraid you will hit your head,

so I close the doors one by one. You open, I close.

At the kitchen counter we move

around each other with the sound of a cello

streaming making my skin alive.

"Do you like it?"

"What? The music? It sounds like whining."

Sweet carrots, green celery, red onion stinging my eyes,

the same basics, and I am still not fully there.

Thinking. "Would you like a glass of wine?" you ask.

When the butter squash fills the pot

I add the flavoring. A pinch of salt,

a spoon of coconut, fragrant cilantro.

"It's only Wednesday and I will miss

my morning exercise, if I drink," I say.

Then there is work. Is it adding pressure

or taking it off? Our whole life

comes down to one simmering pot. Present moment,

not easy at first but I am learning.

The steam makes a whizzing sound,
a sign the soup is ready. The aroma
fills the house. Next time I will dismiss my fear
of the lid blowing up. Understanding. I make sure
to know how to live and add just enough
that brings out more color and flavor,
like the soup we are about to eat.

From scratch. We started with all fresh
ingredients, now we sit facing each other
over the steaming bowls of soup, an offering
to give to each other. A swirl of white yogurt
seems like a simple indulgence. Pure pleasure,
bits of cinnamon tickle my tongue.

Tomorrow we will make
another soup—different, I've learned,
a soup we'll never eat again.



Please feel free to share with a friend.

thehappybody.com