

My Ouma's Barley, Red Lentil and Split Pea Soup

I can have soup at any time of the day and on any day of the year!

I remember many cold and rainy afternoons in Bo-Kaap when my Ouma (grandmother) would make barley soup. My brothers and I would come in from the rain, often soaking wet from playing outside. We'd look like wet little puppies, just waiting to be warmed and cuddled. After we'd washed up and dressed in a fresh set of clothing, we'd eagerly wait for her warm and comforting barley soup. Love in a bowl from Ouma's Bo-Kaap kitchen.



SERVES 6

2 C (500 ml) soup mix (containing barley, red lentils, split peas)
2 allspice berries
2 whole cloves
2.5 litres water
500–700 g beef shin or chuck, cubed with the bone in
1 leek, sliced
2 medium stalks celery, chopped
3 carrots, peeled and grated
3 Tbsp (45 ml) tomato paste
1 Tbsp (15 ml) sea salt or to taste
1 tsp (5 ml) freshly ground black pepper or to taste
handful fresh parsley, roughly chopped
2 Tbsp (30 ml) alphabet pasta (optional)

1. Place the soup mix in a large saucepan, add the allspice, cloves, 1 litre water and boil on high heat for about 40 minutes.
2. Stir in the beef, vegetables, tomato paste, salt and pepper.
3. Add another 1 litre water and cook on high heat for 15 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for a further 20 minutes.
4. Check the soup, as it should have thickened, and adjust the seasoning.
5. Add the parsley and alphabet pasta and the remaining 500 ml water.
6. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for another 20 minutes.
7. Remove from the heat and check seasoning again before serving piping hot.

CHEF'S TIP

You can opt for different cuts of beef, though I prefer beef chuck with the bone in. The chuck contains a lot of connective tissue, including collagen, which partially melts during the cooking process, making this cut of meat perfect for roasting, braising, stews and soups. The marrow in the bones is also dense in nutrients and iron, and provides a buttery, nutty and fatty flavour to the soup.