

Delicious Soup from the Freezer
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Winter brings blustery winds, rain and snow, chilly days and freezing nights. Winter also brings out the old family cookbook for that just right soup recipe to warm the body and soul. Favorite family recipes can not be beat for comfort, but some recipes seem to make enough to feed the neighborhood. Freezing the leftovers in convenient serving sizes may be easy and safe, with these simple guidelines.

Some foods will freeze beautifully, while others seem to turn to rubber or mush. The National Center for Home Food Preservation publishes a list of foods that do not freeze well. That list includes the following ingredients:

Cabbage, celery, cress, cucumbers, endive, lettuce, parsley, radishes	Cheese or crumb toppings
Irish potatoes, baked or boiled	Cream or custard fillings
Cooked macaroni, spaghetti or rice	Milk sauces
Egg whites, cooked	Sour cream

When preparing delicious soup recipes keep these ingredients in mind and do not add to the stock which will be frozen. These may be cooked separately and added to the base recipe when the frozen soup thaws. If the recipe in question contains a cream or milk base, be aware that the soup may separate or the dairy portion may curdle when frozen.

Some spices and seasonings change flavor when frozen. Garlic, green peppers and cloves, tend toward bitterness. Celery seasonings increase in intensity, and salt can lose flavor and increase the rancidity of soups containing fat. The recommendation is to season lightly before freezing and to add more seasonings to the thawed, heated soup seems quite reasonable.

Remember to thaw soups properly in the refrigerator. Do not thaw any food on the countertop, as food that has been frozen may actually encourage undesirable organisms to multiply more rapidly than in other foods that have not been frozen. Remember to never keep foods in the “danger zone” (40°F-140°F) for more than 2 hours. Frozen soups may also be taken directly from the freezer and cooked in a double-boiler or on the stove top.

This recipe, from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, can be doubled and freezes well. Add the pasta just before serving, not before freezing.

Turkey or Chicken Soup

Yield: 2 servings

1 cup chopped, cooked turkey or chicken
dash of pepper
1/4 chopped onion

1/4 cup chopped celery
2 thinly chopped carrots
1/4 teaspoon thyme
2 cups low sodium chicken broth
1 cup cooked pasta (such as bowtie, shells, macaroni, etc.) OR 1 cup cooked rice

Add all ingredients, except pasta or rice, to pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook covered until vegetables are tender crisp, about 10 to 15 minutes.
Add cooked pasta or cooked rice and cook a few more minutes until pasta or rice is heated.

Questions about safe home food preservation? Call the Master Food Preservers and leave a message at (530) 621-5506. A Master Food Preserver will return the call. The Master Food Preservers are also available free of charge to speak to organizations and clubs about food safety or food preservation topics. Just call the number above to arrange for a speaker for small or large groups. For more information about the public education classes and activities, including the free public classes on food safety and pressure canning, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/.