

# Split Pea Soup with Ham

**Servings:** 6 to 8

A thick, creamy, and delicious soup. Adding a bit of balsamic vinegar just before serving makes the taste special and lighter. It tastes even better the next day. I always make this delicious and comforting soup after I baked a bone-in ham. This recipe does not require overnight soaking. Many recipes require that the split peas be soaked 8 hours or overnight before starting recipes, but this is not necessary nowadays. This soup calls for split peas, but you can use yellow or red lentils instead (same weight and cooking directions).

## **Special Equipment:**

- Large Dutch oven

## **Ingredients**

- One pound dried split peas
- 1 ham bone with meat attached
- 1 large bay leaf
- 8 cups water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 2 medium carrot, peeled and thinly sliced

- 2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 5 large cloves garlic, smashed and peeled, divided
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon hot sauce, (preferably Tabasco)
- 1 teaspoon good-quality balsamic vinegar, or to taste
- crusty bread rolls or French bread/baguette, for serving

## **Directions**

Pick through the split peas to make sure there are no small stones or other debris mixed with them. Wash under cold running water.

Put the ham bone and split peas in a large Dutch oven. Add the bay leaf and 1 clove of garlic. Pour over the water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Skim any scum from the surface. (Note: DO NOT add salt here! Adding salt at this point will toughen the peas, thereby lengthening their cooking time.) Lower the heat, cover the pot and gently simmer for 1-1/2 hours (90 minutes), or until soup is thick and the peas have disintegrated; stirring every 10 – 20 minutes.

Remove the ham bone and allow to cool. (Note: Check the soup pot for large pieces of ham and/or hunks of fat.) Remove any remaining ham from the ham bone. Discard ham bone. Remove any existing cartilage and excess fat from the ham and cut into bite sized pieces. Add ham to the soup pot.

Heat the olive oil and butter in a large skillet. Add onions to the skillet and sauté for 5 minutes. Season with salt and

pepper. Add the celery, carrots and potatoes. Season with salt and pepper and sauté for 10 more minutes.

In the mean time, press the remaining 4 cloves of garlic or mash them in a mortar and pestle. Add the garlic to the vegetables mixture and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the cumin; Sauté for 1 more minute.

Add the vegetables mixture to the soup pot. Add a ladle of the soup to the saucepan to get any bits left behind and add to the lentils pot. Stir to combine. Add hot sauce. (Note: If soup is too thick, add water, beef stock, or chicken stock to your desired consistency.) Check soup for seasoning. Adjust only if required. Allow the soup to return to a simmer. Cover the pot and gently simmer for 15 minutes; stirring frequently to keep the solids from sticking and burning on the bottom.

Remove the bay leaf and discard. Add the balsamic vinegar. Ladle the soup into bowls and serve hot with crusty bread rolls or French bread/baguette.