Chef Todd Mohr's Web Cooking Classes.com

Soups

"Perhaps no other area of the kitchen allows the chef to use his or her imagination and creativity as much as in the preparation of soups. The variety of ingredients, seasonings and garnishes that can be used for soups is virtually endless, provided you understand the basic procedures for making the various kinds of soup."

Clear Soups

All clear soups start as broths. Broths may be served as finished items, or used as the base for other soups. Broths are made from meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables cooked in a liquid.

Procedure for Preparing Broths:

Cut the main ingredient to increase surface area (chicken, beef, shrimp).

1. For increased flavor, ingredients may be browned to caramelized sugars.
2. Place the main ingredient and vegetables in a stock pot and add enough cold water to cover.
3. Bring the liquid slowly to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook, skimming impurities occasionally until the main ingredient is tender and the flavor is fully developed.
4. Carefully strain the broth through cheesecloth, trying not to disturb the flavoring ingredients in order to preserve the broth's clarity.
5. Cool and store, or bring to a boil for service.

Transforming a broth into a broth-based soup is quite simple. A broth-based vegetable soup is one in which the vegetables are cooked directly in the broth, adding flavor, body and texture to the finished product. When making broth-based vegetable soups, each ingredient must be added at the proper time so that all ingredients are fully cooked when the soup is finished. Ingredients must cook long enough to add their flavors and soften sufficiently. Because appearance is so important to a well made soup, particular attention should be paid to cutting ingredients so that the pieces are uniform and visually appealing and cook evenly.

Puree Soups

Puree soups are hearty soups made by cooking starchy vegetables or legumes in a stock or broth, then pureeing all or a portion of them to thicken the soup. Puree soups are similar to cream soups in that they both consist of a main ingredient that is first cooked in a liquid, then pureed. The primary difference is that puree soups are not thickened with roux or a starch, but use the starch content of the main ingredient for thickening. Also, puree soups are coarser than cream soups and are not strained after pureeing. Puree soups can be made with dried or fresh beans such as peas, lentils, navy beans, black beans, or any number or vegetables including cauliflower, celery, turnips, and potatoes. Diced potatoes or rice are often used to help thicken vegetable puree soups.

Cream Soups

Most cream soups are made by simmering the main flavoring ingredient in a flavored broth or thickened white sauce to which seasonings have been added. The mixture is then pureed and strained. After consistency has been adjusted, the soup is finished by adding cream. All cream soups are finished with milk or cream. This adds texture and consistency. Cold milk and cream curdle easily if added directly to a hot or acidic soup. Never add cold milk or cream to a hot soup. Bring the milk or cream to a simmer before adding it to the soup. Do not boil a soup after milk or cream has been added, it will curdle.

Procedure for making cream soups:

1. In a soup pot, sweat hard vegetables such as carrots, onions, celery in oil or butter without browning.
2. Thicken the soup by:
3. Add flour and cook to make a blond roux, then add the broth or milk
4. Add stock to the vegetables, bring to a simmer, then add a cold roux that was prepared separately or…
5. Add a previously prepard veloute or béchamel white sauce
6. Bring to a slow simmer
7. Add any soft vegetables such as broccoli or asparagus
8. Simmer the soup, skimming impurities until vegetables are tender
9. Puree the soup and strain through cheesecloth
10. Finish the soup by adding hot milk or cream to adjust consistency
11. Adjust seasonings

Procedure of making puree soups:

1. Sweat vegetables in butter without browning
2. Add the cooking liquid
3. Add the main ingredients
4. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer; cook until all ingredients are soft enough to puree.
5. Reserve a portion of the liquid to adjust the soup's consistency.

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