

## Simple, Scrumptious Soups for National Soup Month!

It's winter, the holidays are over, and what fits the bill better than homemade, quick and easy, delicious bowls of soup to chase away the chill and fill us up with goodness! Just leave it to Jungle Jim's to kick off National Soup Month by installing a 17-foot-tall swing set with a 5½-foot-tall singing and talking Campbell's Soup Can swinging and chattering with all the Jungle passerbys! It's just one more way Jungle Jim's makes grocery shopping an entertaining, fun activity for everyone!

This first soup, Pasta Fagioli (pronounced pasta fa-ZHOH-lee or pasta fa-ZHOHLL), is a favorite of my family! Since trying numerous variations traveling in Italy, I have come up with my own version that is not only quick and easy, but also very scrumptious and versatile. Let's start with my simple recipe and then discuss how we can personalize it to your taste!

### Margie's Pasta Fagioli Soup

1 Tsp.	Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Use 1 Tab. If not using sausage)
1 Cup	Onion, diced
1-2 Cloves	Garlic, minced
½ lb.	Fresh Italian Sausage, casing removed*
1½Cups	Water or 1 Cup Water & ½ Cup White Wine
1 - 14 oz.	Can of Low-Sodium,Low-Fat Chicken Broth
1 - 15 or 19 oz.	Can of Cannellini, or white northern beans, Drained
1 - 14.5 oz.	Can of Diced Tomatoes, Italian Herb, Undrained
½ Cup	Ditalini or Ditali, uncooked (or substitute any other tiny pasta or tiny macaroni shape)
¼ Teas.	Freshly Ground Pepper
½ Teas.	Salt to taste
2 Tab.	Fresh Parsley or Fresh Basil, chopped
Garnish:	Parmigiano Reggiano Cheese, shaved or shredded
	Extra Chopped Fresh Parsley
	Crostini

Heat one teaspoon of olive oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add diced onion, garlic, and lean sausage. Sauté 5-7 minutes until onion is tender and sausage is browned, breaking up sausage into bite-size pieces while cooking. Drain off any excess fat.

Add water, broth, beans, tomatoes, salt and pepper, and bring to a boil. Add pasta, cover, and reduce heat to medium and cook 7-9 minutes or until pasta is tender. Stir in fresh parsley. Taste and adjust seasonings if desired.

Ladle into bowls and top with freshly grated parmesan cheese; my favorite is Parmigiano-Reggiano. You can also top soup with a few crostini (little Italian toasts) and shredded cheese.

#### Variations:

This version of Pasta Fagioli includes lean Italian sausage made fresh at Jungle Jim's --- you can use the mild or the hot, depending on how you like it --- if you want more control over "a touch of heat", you can use the mild sausage and add some crushed red pepper flakes to taste. You can also substitute pancetta or bacon for the Italian sausage or serve it without any meat at all, as I do quite often. It still has so much great flavor, you won't even miss the meat!

You can also add diced carrot or celery to the onion and sauté to add some more vegetables or you can rip baby spinach leaves and place in your serving soup bowl and add the hot soup on top --- the spinach will wilt from the hot liquid and adds flavor and nutrition as well. In Italy, the locals love their Cannellini beans, so they would add an extra can and you can, too, if you like. Everyone needs a little extra fiber!

To add a special touch: top the soup with a few thin crostini, grate some fresh Parmigiano-Reggiano on top of the toast, sprinkling some shredded fresh Basil on top of the cheese --- magnifico!

I would also like to share a BONUS SOUP, as it is just as quick and easy and delicious! Although the assortment of ingredients is similar, the taste is totally different with a surprisingly wonderful Mediterranean flavor created by the combination of ground cumin and cinnamon – a perfect match for the chicken, pasta, and chick peas. This one will be the perfect soup to use any leftover cooked chicken you have --- I'll bet ya'!

### Mediterranean Chicken Soup

1 Tab.	Extra Virgin Olive Oil
1 Cup	Onion, diced
1½ Cups	Water or 1 Cup Water with ½ Cup White Wine
1 - 14 oz.	Can of Low-Sodium, Low-Fat Chicken Broth
1 - 14.5 oz.	Can of Chickpeas (Garbanzo Beans), drained and rinsed
1 - 14.5 oz.	Can of Diced Tomatoes, undrained
½ Cup	Farfalline (little bow-shaped pasta), uncooked (or substitute any other TINY pasta like ditaline or ditali, etc.)
½ Teas.	Ground Cumin
¼ Teas.	Ground Cinnamon
¼ Teas.	Freshly Ground Pepper
	Salt to Taste
2 Cups	Shredded or cubed Cooked Chicken (can use leftover cooked chicken (approx. 2 cooked chicken breast halves)
2 Tabs.	Fresh Parsley, chopped

Heat tablespoon of Extra Virgin Olive Oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add diced onion. Sauté 4 minutes until onion is tender. Add water, broth, chickpeas, tomatoes, cumin, cinnamon, salt and pepper and bring to a boil. Add pasta and reduce heat to medium and cook 7-9 minutes or until pasta is tender. Stir in shredded or cut chicken pieces and warm thoroughly. Stir in parsley. Ladle into bowls and serve immediately.

**Jungle Jim's, Channel 9, and I would like to wish you and yours a very, very Happy, Safe, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year! Please Join Me at the Swinging, Singing Campbell Soup Can And Happy Healthy National Soup Month to You!**

*Jungle Jim's Margie Potts*