



NEWS RELEASE

Defense Commissary Agency

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When the weather turns cold, heat up your appetite with soups and chili

*By Kay Blakley,
DeCA home economist*

FORT LEE, Va. – A curious phenomenon occurs in commissaries everywhere this time of year. In order to be prepared for it, our meat and grocery managers have learned to pay close attention to the weather forecast; because the first cold snap of the season brings hordes of commissary shoppers in search of soup and chili fixin's. And, why not – a bowl of well-seasoned chili is tailor-made for chili weather; and if you choose the ingredients carefully, a steaming bowl of soup offers a ton of satisfaction for only a handful of calories.

Chili is about as personal as our most comfortable pair of shoes – we each know how we like it, and no other way will do. If that description fits you, and you have a favorite recipe, then just keep using it. If you're still playing the field for a favorite, try my very own recipe for Southwest Style Chili, which includes canned hominy in addition to the usual beef and beans combination. Even people who think they don't like hominy love my Southwest Style Chili.

Looking for something a little lighter in calories, but still warm and soothing? Try one of the featured soup recipes. Soups lowest in calories will almost always be those made with vegetables and a clear broth base. If the recipe starts with sautéing the vegetables in butter or oil, cut calories by using only half the fat called for and add 1/4 cup water or broth. This technique, called sweating, serves the same purpose as sautéing (tenderization and flavor development) and sometimes does it even better.

If cream soups are more to your liking, but you think they are all too high in fat and calories, do the math before rejecting a favorite recipe. Divide the total amount of cream called for into the total number of servings the recipe will make. For many recipes, a one-cup serving of the soup will contain only a few tablespoons of cream. There are 16 tablespoons in a cup, by the way – you’ll need to know that in order to do the math. Most cream soups can also be made with low-fat milk, yogurt or a touch of sour cream, all of which are much lower in fat and calories than regular cream.

No time to cook? No problem! We’ve got you covered with a wide selection of ready-made soups including canned soups (both condensed and ready-to-serve) packaged dried soup fixin’s (just add water or broth) even soups to sip while you’re on the run (just microwave, shake and drink from the built-in, sip-top lid). Want it at cost? Then buy it at the commissary where an average of more than 30 percent savings is already built in. Bring your coupons to save even more!

To check out the recipes below and more, come to Kay’s Kitchen at <http://www.commissaries.com>. As always, you’ll save 30 percent or more on the ingredients for all of these recipes in your local commissary.

Southwest Style Chili (Serves 4)

Ingredients:

1 pound extra lean ground beef
1/2 medium onion, diced
1 package chili seasoning mix
1 (11.5 ounces) can tomato or vegetable juice
1 (15 ounces) can Ranch Style beans, with liquid
1 (15.5 ounce) can golden hominy, drained
1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar or Mexican Blend
3 green onions, thinly sliced
1 package 6-inch flour tortillas
Butter or margarine

Directions:

1. Brown ground beef and onion in a large saucepan or Dutch oven.
2. Stir in the chili seasoning mix, add enough water to keep the mixture from scorching (about 1/4 to 1/2 cup) and cook until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.
3. Add tomato or vegetable juice, Ranch Style beans, and drained hominy. Bring mixture to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for about 30 minutes. Add water or additional juice, as necessary, to reach desired consistency.
4. Ladle chili into bowls, top with a generous handful of shredded cheese and sprinkle with sliced green onions.

5. Serve with hot tortillas spread with butter, then rolled or folded into quarters.

Chicken and Vegetable Soup (Serves 6)

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken or turkey breasts, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 small onion, diced
- 4 stalks celery, sliced
- 4 cups low-sodium, low-fat chicken broth
- 1 cup sliced fresh or frozen carrots
- 1 cup fresh or frozen green beans
- 1 (8 ounces) can diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, minced, or more to taste
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch (optional)

Directions:

1. Heat the oil in a large, heavy saucepan or Dutch oven. Add the chicken or turkey, onions and celery and sauté until vegetables are tender.
2. Add remaining ingredients and simmer, uncovered, for 1 hour.
3. For thicker consistency, mix the cornstarch with 3 to 4 tablespoons water and stir into soup during the last 20 minutes of cooking time.

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About DeCA: *The Defense Commissary Agency operates a worldwide chain of commissaries providing groceries to military personnel, retirees and their families in a safe and secure shopping environment. Authorized patrons purchase items at cost plus a 5-percent surcharge, which covers the costs of building new commissaries and modernizing existing ones. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent on their purchases compared to commercial prices – savings worth more than \$4,400 annually for a family of four. A core military family support element, and a valued part of military pay and benefits, commissaries contribute to family readiness, enhance the quality of life for America’s military and their families, and help recruit and retain the best and brightest men and women to serve their country.*