

# January is National Soup and Wheat Bread Month

Soup is an ancient food, prepared with great variation all over the world. In India parched barley was ground with juices to make one kind of soup. Mayan Indians used maize for various liquid foods. Early North American Indians made a broth of hickory-nut milk. Yosemite Indians shredded fungi for mushroom soup and also cooked horse-chestnut gruel. The Greeks made soups of beans, peas or lentils or black broth, made of pork, blood, vinegar, salt and seasonings.

In early times soup was called "pottage" (from pot and the Latin potare, to drink), but by the Middle Ages, the word "soup" had replaced "pottage" in most European languages. The word soup is thought to have come from the sound made by slurping hot liquid from a spoon. Some variations of the word are soop, sopa, sope, soepe, suppa, soppe, soep, suppe, soppa, soper, soupe, chupe, zuppa, and zup. To sup was to eat the evening meal at which soup was traditionally served. Eventually the meal itself became supper.

A fast-food first! Soup has been so popular throughout time that it's actually considered one of the first fast foods. There is documentation that as early as 600 B.C., the Greeks sold soup as a fast food on the street, using peas, beans and lentils as main ingredients.

Before there was soup, there was broth, which people used to pour over a piece of bread in a bowl. That bread was known as sop, and from sop came the word soup.

No matter what you call it, there are lots of variations on the basic theme of soup, each offering a wide range of nutritional benefits. Cream soups such as chowders and bisques are often high in calories and fat due to the cream or milk content. Broth-based soups such as consommés will typically be low in calories because of the high water content. Soups loaded with beans and vegetables, such as chili and gazpacho are great sources of fiber and phytochemicals (like lycopene). Canned and condensed soups typically contain large amounts of sodium to enhance the flavor.

The most recognized soup company in the world is the Campbell Soup Company. It was founded in 1869, and originally called the Joseph A. Campbell Preserve Company. The business produced canned tomatoes, vegetables, jellies, soups, condiments, and minced meats.

*Teachers - Here are some Soup Activities:*

- Celebrate National Soup Month by introducing students to some of the vegetables grown in West Virginia. Read the classic, Stone Soup.
- Provide an assortment of West Virginia vegetables and meat in well-sealed plastic bags.
- Students write observations and predict what the raw foods will look like after it has cooked in the crock pot for four hours.
- Measure the vegetables and record measurements. (Dice large vegetables ahead of time, but have the whole vegetable available for students to see what it looks like before.)
- Students add up volume of all ingredients, including water, to get total volume of soup
- Students measure temperature of soup before cooking.
- Students classify vegetables - roots (potatoes, carrots, onions), leaves (greens), stems (celery), fruit (Can a fruit be a vegetable? tomatoes, peas, etc.)
- Students write observations after soup has cooked.
- Students measure temperature of soup after cooking.
- Teacher carefully measures soup into bowls for students after cooking and then measure what remains.
- Discuss any difference between starting volume and ending volume. What happened to the soup that disappeared?
- Students taste soup and vote on their favorite ingredient. Graph results.
- Be creative and have your students come up with a recipe for stone soup based on products that are locally available. Plant a school garden and grow the vegetables that you will use to make your own stone soup.
- Make bread to go with your soup in honor of Wheat Bread month. You might challenge students to find out what products are made from or with wheat.

Wheat is the most commonly grown small grain in West Virginia. Jefferson County ranks first and Berkeley County second in wheat production in West Virginia. Wheat is also known by its Latin name *Triticum* (cereal). American colonists brought wheat with them from Europe. Most of the first wheat brought to the U.S. was winter wheat. In 1898 durum wheat was brought into the U.S. from Russia as a spring wheat. There are thousands of varieties of wheat grown around the world but they are divided into six classes based on hardness, color, and time of planting. The six classes are: Hard Red Winter, Hard Red Spring, Soft Red Spring, Durum, Hard White and Soft White.

Which state ranks first in wheat production? If you said Kansas you are right. Kansas is called the "Wheat State" and "Breadbasket of the World"; followed by North Dakota, Montana, Oklahoma and Washington as the top five wheat producing states in the U.S. Kansas produces three of the six classes of wheat. Hard Red Winter, used for yeast breads and rolls. Winter wheat is planted and sprouts in the fall, becomes dormant in the winter, grows again in the spring and is harvested in early summer. Soft Red Winter Wheat is used for flat breads, cakes, pastries and crackers. Hard White Wheat, used for yeast breads, hard rolls, tortillas and noodles.

### ***2009 Ag Ed Dinner Meetings - February 12***

The two remaining 2009 Agricultural Education Dinner Meetings will be held February 12, and March 12 at 6:30 p.m. Our speaker for the February 12th dinner meeting will be David Richmond. The topic will be Farm Management Decisions for the Future. David Richmond is the Extension Agent in Raleigh and Summers counties. Please make a reservation to attend the dinner meeting by calling Mary Beth Bennett at 304-264-1936 by noon on Wednesday, February 4 if you plan to attend the meeting on Monday, February 12.

Hope to see you there!

### ***West Virginia Small Farms Conference***

The West Virginia Small Farms Conference will be held February 24-26 at the Ramada Inn, Morgantown, WV. Topics this year include Renewable and Alternative Fuels, The New Agritourism, Soil Health/Cover Crops, Pastured Poultry, On-Farm Composting, Ask the Meat Specialist, Etc.

For a complete list of topics go to:

[www.wvu.edu/~agexten/sustanag/events/wv\\_small\\_farms\\_conference/index.htm](http://www.wvu.edu/~agexten/sustanag/events/wv_small_farms_conference/index.htm)

### ***Beekeeping Short Course***

The Eastern Panhandle Beekeeper's Association (EPBA) is making final preparations to conduct another Beekeeping Short Course. The six week program, which ends with a field day to gain "hands-on experience", is designed to enable area families interested in beekeeping to get started. An added feature of the program is that mentors are assigned to those who want additional help in getting through the first year of work with a colony of bees. The instruction will be offered on Tuesday evenings from February 17 through March 24 from 7 to 9 p.m. at the West Virginia University Fruit Tree Research and Education Center on Rt. 9 in Kearneysville. The cost of registration is \$30 per family if received by February first and \$40 if participants wait and register at the door. The fee covers the instructional text book as well as dues in the EPBA and the West Virginia Beekeepers Association. EPBA President Gerry Fitzgerald stated that 70 people participated in last year's program and the association was able to help them in procuring over a hundred colonies of bees and related equipment. He also indicated that in order to encourage young people to get involved in beekeeping an art contest will be conducted for local middle school and high school students. The theme will be "Bees Making Honey" and the students work will be judged by a team of local artists. The winners will receive free course tuition and a variety of other prizes so that every participant receives encouragement for their creative work and appreciation of their interest in bees.

Anyone interested in participating in the course should contact EPBA President Gerry Fitzgerald at (304) 274-1564 or via email at [GerryFitzgerald\\_1@msn.com](mailto:GerryFitzgerald_1@msn.com) To register, send your name, mailing address, phone number and if available, an email address along with a check made out to the Eastern Panhandle Beekeeper's Association for \$30. The mailing address is EPBA, 1062 Duncan road, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

This introductory beekeeping course is actively supported by the State of West Virginia Department of Agriculture. A state bee inspector is also made available to provide expertise on any emergent issues and help in monitoring the health of the bee colonies. When beekeepers register their colonies with the state they are also eligible to participate in state assistance programs. Last year the state assisted in obtaining new bee colonies, as well as feed and pharmaceutical supplies. Additional information about the EPBA and the course can be obtained from Gerry Fitzgerald at (304) 274-1564 or via email at [GerryFitzgerald\\_1@msn.com](mailto:GerryFitzgerald_1@msn.com)

***Save the Date! March 13, 2009***

Join us for the 5th Annual Forum for Rural Innovation showcasing innovative ideas, projects, and programs to enhance farm profitability. Friday, MARCH 13, 2009 8:00am - 3:30pm  
Lee-Jackson Best Western, Winchester, VA \$35 Registration fee  
Information will be available on [www.LoudounFarms.org](http://www.LoudounFarms.org)

***Garden Tips***

- Make plans for your 2009 garden by checking out seed catalogs or on websites
- Pick up your 2009 Garden Calendar. Calendars are available at the local Extension Office or the following locations in Berkeley County: Tractor Supply, Boltz's Hardware, Orr's Farm Market, Petrucci Farm Market, Martinsburg Library, Martinsburg Farm Service Agency, Arden Equipment and WEPM Radio.

*A special thank you to Keena Crowell and the Hedgesville 4-H Junior Volunteer Fire Company for help in distributing the Garden Calendars.*

***Until next time ...Happy Gardening, and Farming!***