

# SUP, GLORIOUS SUP

Turn to your bowl when you  
want a spicy, slurpy fix

By Andrea Lynn  
Recipes by Meredith Deeds and Carla Snyder

A bowl of steaming hot soup on a frigid winter day is enough to make you swoon. “Soup is just so comforting. We can all relate to it. You take what you have in the house and make it into soup,” says Meredith Deeds, the author of the recently released book *300 Sensational Soups* written with her cookbook partner Carla Snyder. The duo has tackled numerous subjects, from appetizers to take-out food, but no topic was ever so enthusiastically greeted.

Bill Mline



*Knock-Your-Socks-Off  
Chipotle Chili Soup*

“We’ve had an amazing response and a stronger reaction than any other book. Everyone says, ‘I love soup!’” says Deeds. In addition to standards like chicken noodle, they also wanted to translate meals into a soup format. Ever think about a steakhouse soup? “In our steak and potato soup, I took all the flavors I loved from steakhouses like mushrooms, a hint of steak sauce and crispy onions and created a soup,” Deeds says. Savor all the elements of a loaded baked potato turned into a soup with bacon, cheese and sour cream, and topped with crispy potato skins, also featured in the cookbook.

The authors’ families played a pivotal role in recipe feedback and consultation during the year of soup development and testing. Deeds’ 10-year-old son, Kyle, suggested a lasagna soup, which she happily obliged. Her sons also requested nachos one night for dinner that appeared as Nacho Cheese and Chicken Soup.

Spicy soups like Coconut Curried Chickpea and Green Posole with Pork and Chicken play a major role in the book. When adding chiles, Snyder tastes her habaneros or jalapeños before tossing them into the soup pot so she has a better idea how much heat will be generated. She enjoys Thai chiles for their reliable, scorching heat. And if that’s not enough, there’s always the ever-reliable jar of flakes.

“Throw in some red pepper flakes to give your dish a shot in the arm,” says Snyder, who often has to ask her husband to please taste the soup without first applying his usual generous coating of red-hot seasoning.

For all those who think a skimpy soup isn’t hearty enough to pass as a dinnertime meal, Snyder and Deeds welcome the challenge. They say sometimes all you need is a topper to bulk up that soup. “A soup is naked without a little something on top,” says Deeds, who offers suggestions like grilled cheese croutons afloat in tomato soup or ground beef soup with chili-cornmeal dumplings. Also, Snyder recommends serving soup with good bread or eating a lighter soup with a salad and rotisserie chicken to be dinner-meal worthy.

And don’t overlook the liquid helper for holiday meals. “Soups are a great vehicle for entertaining and perfect for the holiday season. They can be made two days ahead of time and always taste better later,” says Deeds. “Plus, everything’s always a little more special when you start with soup as a first course.”

Finally, beware of soup overload, as experienced by Deeds’ family. “After a while, the kids said, ‘Mom, wouldn’t it be great to have forks on the table again?’ ”

*All recipes adapted from 300 Sensational Soups (Robert Rose) by Meredith Deeds and Carla Snyder.*

## Knock-Your-Socks-Off Chipotle Chili Soup

*Yield: 6 to 8 servings • Zest Factor: Medium*  
Chipotle and black beans are often paired together, probably because the earthy flavor of the beans holds up well against the smoky chipotles. Serve during a football viewing party with a big bowl of warm tortilla chips on the side.

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1½ pounds lean ground beef
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- ¼ cup chile powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 1 (14-ounce) can crushed tomatoes with added purée, or diced tomatoes with juice
- 6 cups beef stock
- 3 tablespoons minced chipotle chiles in adobo
- 2 (14-ounce) cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- Cilantro Cream (see recipe, this page)
- corn tortilla chips

In a large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add ground beef and sauté, breaking up with the back of a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, about 5 minutes. Drain any excess fat. Add garlic and onions; cook until softened, about 6 minutes. Add chile powder, salt and pepper; sauté for 2 minutes.

Add tomatoes, stock and chiles; bring to

a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour. Add beans, and simmer for 10 minutes. Taste, and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Ladle into heated bowls, and top each with a dollop of cilantro cream. Stick a few chips upright into the cream.

## Cilantro Cream

*Yield: 1 ¼ cups • Zest Factor: Medium-Hot*

- 1 cup packed cilantro sprigs, finely chopped
- 1 jalapeño, seeded
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- salt

In a small bowl, stir together cilantro, jalapeño, sour cream, lime juice, and salt to taste.

## Tom Yum Gung (Thai Hot-and-Sour Shrimp and Lemongrass Soup)

*Yield: 6 to 8 servings • Zest Factor: Medium-Hot*  
This lovely, light soup perfectly reflects the Thai sense of flavor balance. Sour, spicy, sweet and salty all come together for a soup that’s as easy as it is flavorful. Because it’s simple, it’s even more important to balance the flavors correctly, so make sure you taste the soup before you serve it and adjust the seasonings, if necessary. Also, the lime leaves, chiles, galangal and lemongrass are present only to flavor the soup, not to be eaten.

- 6 cups chicken stock
- 8 wild lime leaves ☹
- 4 small serrano chiles, or other hot green chile, seeded and quartered lengthwise
- 1 thumb-sized knob galangal ☹ or gingerroot, thinly sliced
- 1 stalk lemongrass, cut into 2-inch sections and smashed with the back of a knife
- 1 tablespoon packed light brown sugar
- 1½ tablespoons fish sauce

☹ See Ingredients, Page 93