

Washington Post

Split Pea Soup with Ham

Servings: 4-5 (makes 8 to 10 cups)

Active: 25 mins | Total: 1 hour 10 mins

- 3 tablespoons olive oil, plus more as needed
- 8 to 16 ounces ham, preferably smoked, diced into 1/4-inch cubes
- 1 large yellow onion (12 ounces), diced
- 1 large carrot (5 ounces), diced
- 6 cloves garlic, minced or finely grated
- Fine salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 10 cups low-sodium chicken broth or vegetable broth, plus more as needed
- 1 pound split green peas
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice (from about 2 lemons)

Step 1

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat, heat the oil until it shimmers. Carefully add the ham, watching for splattering, adjusting the heat as necessary, and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 4 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the ham to a bowl.

Step 2

Add the onion, carrot and garlic to the pot along with a big pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, allowing the vegetables to soften, about 5 minutes. If the pot seems dry, add a splash of water or additional oil.

Step 3

Stir in about 1 cup of broth and, using a spoon or spatula, scrape up any browned bits on the bottom of the pot. Increase the heat to high, and add the remaining broth, split peas, bay leaves and another pinch of salt. Bring the soup to a boil, stir it well, then reduce the heat to maintain a lively simmer. Partially cover the pot, and let the soup cook, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching, until the peas are so soft, they've nearly melted, 40 to 45 minutes. Remove from the heat. Remove and discard the bay leaves.

Step 4

If you like your soup chunky: Stir in the reserved ham.

Step 5

If you like your soup smooth: Use an immersion blender to partially or completely puree it. (Or, you can puree the soup in batches in a blender: Be careful to not fill it more than halfway, and make sure to remove the center ring from the lid and hold a kitchen towel over the lid as you blend to prevent splatters.) Stir in the reserved ham.

Step 6

Return the pot to low heat to rewarm the soup. If the soup is thicker than you'd like, stir in more broth. Taste, and adjust the seasonings as needed. Just before serving, stir in the lemon juice.

