

I've gone for an elaborate, (mostly) traditional method here, compiled from several sources, notably Wikipedia: if time and money are a problem, "cheap and cheerful" alternatives exist (see the three quotes below). And certainly the proportions can be varied according to taste and availability. Indeed, that's probably how it was originally developed by the wild peasants, as a "stoup" (between soup and stew) from winter vegetables and leftovers from a main meal. I've been specific in many cases, to avoid ambiguity (for example, the word "clove" occurs in at least two different contexts, and depending on your variety of English, the nature of some vegetables can be ambiguous (but certainly when I say "turnip" below, I don't mean any kind of *Pachyrhizus*)). I've also gone into some detail into different combinations of herbs and *Citrus* varieties, as these are worth exploring in themselves.

"There are as many variations of both lentil soup and Scotch Broth as there are cooks in Scotland, I like my soup so that 'your spoon can stand up in it', as my Dad would say, thick and unctuous, I know others prefer a lighter broth." — Janice Pattie, *Farmersgirl Kitchen*

"A good Scotch broth should, once thoroughly cooked, have a look about it that says, 'Hmm... yes, a dull bowlful if ever I saw one.' Any Scotch broth that looks too colourful [save for plenty of chopped parsley added at the end], too neatly and finely diced — or, heaven forbid, too thin — should be looked upon as an interloper. The lamb should never be 'cooked off' [a meaningless, overused chef's term — at least to the home cook], as many misguided folk now recommend for the making of a Lancashire hotpot, for example, where the meat is first fried in a pan to brown it. Pieces of lamb that simply stew, almost in their own juice, produce one of the most subtle and beautiful flavours I know." — Simon Hopkinson, *The Guardian*

"The great thing about this recipe is that there are no real hard and fast rules — go with the flow, chuck it together and enjoy!" — Down to Earth Foods

INGREDIENTS

Broth mixes of dried cereal and pulses are available: content proportions variable, but one recorded as 55% pearl barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), 18% yellow split peas (*Pisum sativum*), 9% green split peas, 9% blue (marrowfat) peas, 9% red split lentils (*Lens culinaris*) (and no, I don't know if that was by mass or volume)

Lamb, hogget or mutton (*Ovis aries*) (neck, shoulder or shanks), or beef (*Bos taurus*) (stewing cut), or smoked ham hock (*Sus scrofa*), or boiling fowl (e.g. *Gallus gallus*), with bones; one variation from Shetland uses "reestit" mutton (soaked in brine then cured over burning peat)

Smoked streaky bacon rashers (*Sus scrofa* again), finely sliced

Water or (recommended strength or thinner) stock to match meat (vegetable stock might also work, but probably not fish; if you don't know any good stock recipes, they're often available in dehydrated form)

Root vegetables:

Carrot (*Daucus carota sativus*), diced (but not peeled)

Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*), peeled and diced

Turnip (*Brassica napus* or *B napobrassica*), peeled and diced

Swede (*Brassica rapa rapa*), peeled and diced

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*), diced (peeling optional)

Celeriac (*Apium graveolens rapaceum*), peeled and diced

Other vegetables:

Onion (*Allium cepa*, ideally yellow (brown) or red cultivar), diced

Cloves of garlic (*Allium sativum*), minced

Scallions (*Allium cepa*, bulbless green cultivar), chopped

Shallot (*Allium cepa aggregatum*), diced

Syboes (young *Allium cepa cepa* with slight bulb), chopped

Leek (*Allium ampeloprasum*), chopped, rinsed and drained

Celery (*Apium graveolens graveolens*), ideally with leaves, chopped

Kale (*Brassica oleracea sabellica*) or other green leaves, shredded

(If not using kale, garnish the soup with fresh chopped parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) immediately before serving: see below, stages 6 and 7 (one recipe even suggests adding capers (*Capparis spinosa*) at this point!))

Herbs (the following blends are often available premixed as such, or similar: if not, you can make your own by putting the ingredients in cheesecloth or a coffee filter, and tying it with string):

EITHER

Bouquet garni (components variable, but in accordance with this recipe, it should include thyme (*Thymus vulgaris*) and bay leaves (*Laurus nobilis*): other possible ingredients include parsley, oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), basil (*Ocimum basilicum*), burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*), chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), peppercorns (*Piper nigrum*), savory (*Satureja hortensis* or *S montana*), tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*), carrot, celery (leaves or leaf stalks), celeriac, leek, onion, parsley root and sage (*Salvia officinalis*)). Best for

authenticity, according to most sources.

OR

Herbes de Provence (rosemary, thyme, oregano, savory, fennel seeds (*Foeniculum vulgare*), marjoram (*Origanum majorana*), mint (*Mentha spicata* or *M piperita*), lavender flowers (*Lavandula angustifolia*) and dried *Citrus* zest (mandarin (*C reticulata*), pomelo (*C maxima*), citron (*C medica*) or any hybrid (*C sinensis* or *C limon* are probably easier to obtain), but not papeda (except possibly *C micrantha*))). Very good second choice.

OR

Herbes de la Garrigue (thyme, basil, fennel leaves, mint leaves, rosemary, bay leaf and sage). Good third choice.

OR

Fines Herbes (basil, chervil, chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), thyme, tarragon, marjoram, parsley and dill (*Anethum graveolens*)). Satisfactory in a pinch, but must be chosen and blended carefully.

OR

Italian Seasoning (basil, black pepper, bay leaves, oregano, rosemary and sage). Less satisfactory for the purpose.

Or dried mixed herbs (*e.g.* marjoram, basil, oregano and thyme), or cloves (*Syzygium aromaticum*) and ground coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*). Or whatever you find to work.

quality lard or butter

salt and pepper to taste

miniscule quantity of sugar (not enough to taste, so it must have some other purpose)

Dash of Worcestershire sauce (optional)

(If all this seems too complex, a good first attempt would be to get the broth mix and stock right, as detailed below, and on subsequent tries to add more ingredients as confidence grows.)

METHOD

1a. Traditional method for preparing broth mix: soak overnight (at least 8-12 hours, perhaps even 24 if possible) in lots of cold water (500ml for 100g, or as recommended), then drain, rinse and place into a large saucepan with a similar amount of water, boil for 10 minutes, then simmer for 40 minutes until the broth mix has softened but is slightly firm to the bite (*al dente*). Drain, rinse and use.

1b. Alternatively, boil the broth mix in water for 20 minutes, then leave to soak for two hours before starting the soup. Drain, rinse and use. The point of either of these methods is to improve the texture, reduce cooking time and deactivate food phytate to allow better absorption of trace minerals.

2. In a heavy stock pot or Dutch oven, sauté the onion, scallions, shallot, syboes and garlic on a medium heat in the lard or butter until softened, 4-6 minutes.

3. Add the meat, *bouquet garni*, salt, broth mix and water or stock (more if you want a thinner soup), bring to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for two hours. Skim off any unwanted foam from the surface with a slotted spoon (some chefs prefer some or all to remain: if you want to remove it thoroughly, ignore it at this point, allow the soup to cool at the end of this stage, place in the fridge overnight and remove the solidified fat next morning: among other uses, wild birds appreciate it in the winter. Reheat the soup shortly before the planned meal and proceed to stage 4. Some believe this method further improves the flavour).

4. Add the root vegetables and celery, and simmer for another hour.

5. Remove the *bouquet garni*, wringing any liquid back into the dish. Remove the meat, shred it and discard the bones. Return the shredded meat to the pot along with the leek and green leaves (if not using kale). Simmer for another 30 minutes.

6. If using kale, add at this point and leave to cook in the residual heat of the soup for at least 10 minutes before serving (this allows it to retain its colour and nutrients).

7. Check seasoning and adjust as required: add more salt and freshly ground pepper to taste if desired, perhaps also Worcestershire sauce. Garnish with fresh parsley before serving, if not using kale. Traditionally accompanied by whisky and rough-cut crusty wholemeal bread, bannocks or oatcakes.