




*the* **Soup**  
*cure*

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*Move over, chicken soup!  
For centuries, these 6 homemade  
remedies have been comforting  
and curing around the globe*

**W**hether you're battling a bad cold or stuck in bed with the stomach flu, the one food you crave (or, in some cases, the only one you can swallow) is soup. Your preference may be personal—sometimes only grandma's vegetable soup will do—but that urge for something brothy and comforting is universal. Just about every culture turns to soup to heal, nourish, and soothe. "The general properties of soups are that they're warm and easy to take. They're an excellent way of getting nutrients, and they provide good associations for people," explains Andrew Weil, MD, director of the University of Arizona's Program in Integrative Medicine.

Ongoing research confirms the health-giving properties of these home remedies—and their active ingredients. Take culinary cousins onions and garlic, the flavor base for soups

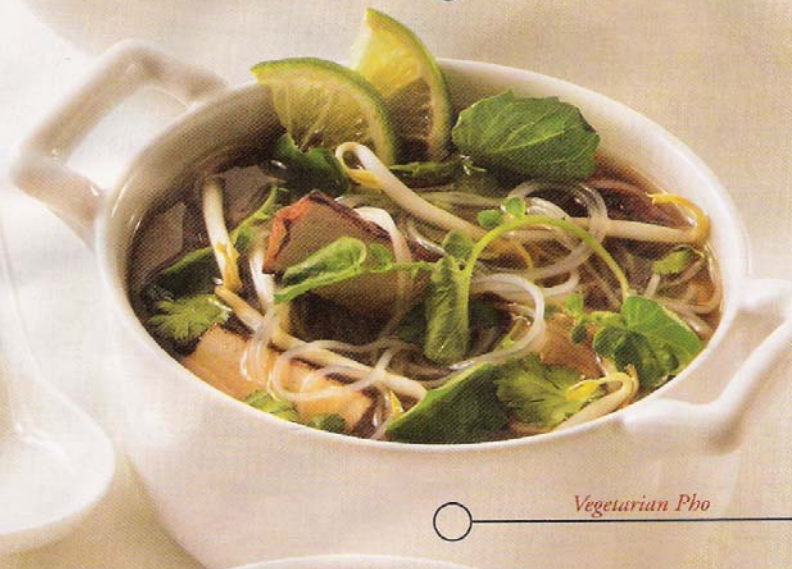
worldwide. "The sulfur-containing compounds in all members of the onion family have immune-enhancing effects," says Weil.

"Soups are also an ideal way of getting health-rich culinary herbs and spices into your diet," adds Tieraona Low Dog, MD, Weil's colleague and director of education at the Program in Integrative Medicine. "All spices are antioxidants and have antimicrobial properties that cut down on bacteria," Low Dog says. "They stimulate salivation and promote digestion."

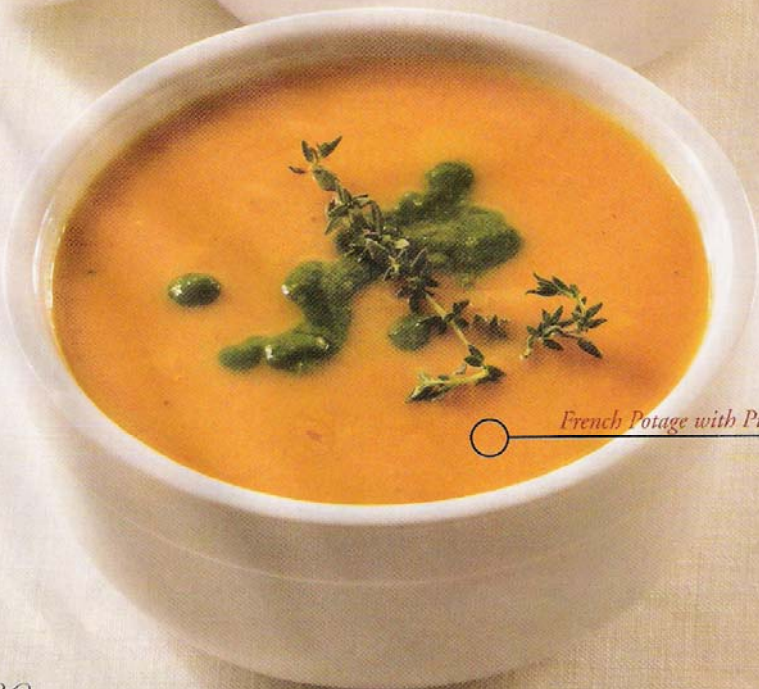
To help you get through winter, we've put together a collection of six healing soups from around the globe that will warm you up while warding off illness. But there's no need to wait till you're feeling low to whip up a batch: These recipes are good enough to serve at a dinner party or brighten up supper on a chilly weeknight.



Eastern European Red Lentil Soup



Vegetarian Pho



French Potage with Pistou

**Red lentil soup** may be the most famous healing soup in history: In the Bible, Esau, claiming to be dying of hunger, sold his birthright to his brother for a bowlful. "In Middle Eastern Jewish households, red lentil soup is also served during mourning for soothing nourishment," says Gil Marks, author of *Olive Trees and Honey: A Treasury of Vegetarian Recipes from Jewish Communities Around the World*.

Weil gives red lentils high marks for their balanced protein-to-carbohydrate ratio that comes in an easy-to-digest legume. "They're also a vehicle for all sorts of spices, all of which have unique health benefits," he adds. "In addition, red onion and garlic lend both flavor and antibacterial benefits."

**Pho** (pronounced *fu*) broth is loaded with garlic, cinnamon, and ginger—all bona fide medicinal foods. Garlic boasts antifungal, antibacterial, and antiviral benefits. "Cinnamon has antifungal and antibacterial properties and is as good as ginger for combating nausea," explains Low Dog. "Ginger is also an anti-inflammatory that warms the body and stimulates circulation."

But vegetarians can't eat most phos because the broth is almost always made with beef or chicken stock. In VT's version, we used dried shiitake mushrooms to keep the hearty taste and pump up the health-giving benefits in the bargain. "Asian mushrooms like shiitakes have lots of antiviral, immune-boosting properties and help lower cholesterol," says Weil.

**"Potage"** has an important place in the French meal in winter—almost every family meal begins with a bowl of this easy soup," says Susan Loomis, author of *On Rue Tatin: Living and Cooking in a Small French Town*. One of potage's key seasonings is thyme, which is used traditionally in Europe to relieve cough and congestion. Weil finds the healing potential of potage both in the soup's rich concentration of onion and garlic and in its consistency. "It's hearty and substantial, but takes little effort to eat," he notes.

**EASTERN EUROPEAN  
RED LENTIL SOUP**

Serves 8 • 30 minutes or fewer

Red lentils are common in Turkish, Indian, and Eastern European dishes and cook in half the time of green or brown lentils. They can be found in Indian and Middle Eastern grocery stores or alongside other dried beans in natural-foods supermarkets. You can also flavor this soup with curry powder, dried thyme, or paprika in place of the ground cumin.

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 large red onion, finely chopped (2 cups)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced (1 Tbs.)
- 1½ cups red lentils
- 2 Tbs. ground cumin
- 1 15-oz. can chopped tomatoes with liquid
- 1 Tbs. honey
- 3 bay leaves
- 1 Tbs. red wine vinegar
- ½ cup plain low-fat yogurt

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and sauté 5 minutes, or until soft. Stir in red lentils and cumin, and cook 1 minute, or until cumin is fragrant and lentils are coated with oil. Stir in tomatoes with liquid, honey, bay leaves, and 7 cups water. Season with salt and pepper, and bring to a boil.
2. Cover pan, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 20 minutes, or until lentils are soft and falling apart, and soup is thick. Add a little water to thin soup, if necessary. Remove bay leaves, stir in vinegar, and serve with dollops of yogurt.

PER SERVING: 211 CAL; 12 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (0.5 G SAT. FAT); 32 G CARB; 1 MG CHOL; 378 MG SOD; 7 G FIBER; 7 G SUGARS

**VEGETARIAN PHO  
(VIETNAMESE NOODLE SOUP)**

Serves 6 • Vegan

The national soup of Vietnam is a bowl of rice noodles, fresh herbs, and bean sprouts swimming in a fragrant broth.

- Broth**
- 6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
  - 3 large shallots, sliced (1 cup)
  - ½ cup dried shiitake mushrooms
  - 10 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
  - 3 Tbs. low-sodium soy sauce
  - 12 ½-inch-thick coins fresh ginger
  - 1 Tbs. brown sugar
  - 1 Tbs. rice wine vinegar
  - 1 tsp. ground black pepper
  - 2 cinnamon sticks
  - 2 star anise
  - 5–6 fresh basil stems, leaves reserved for soup
  - 5–6 cilantro stems, leaves reserved for soup

- Pho**
- 1 8-oz. pkg. rice noodles
  - 1 8-oz. pkg. Asian-flavor baked tofu, thinly sliced
  - 2 cups soybean sprouts
  - 2 cups watercress
  - 4 green onions, sliced (½ cup)
  - ¼ cup chopped cilantro
  - 1 cup fresh basil leaves
  - 1 lime, cut into wedges

1. To make Broth: Place all ingredients in large pot with 8 cups water. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer, covered, 1 hour. Strain broth, and return to pot. Discard solids.

2. To make Pho: Cook rice noodles according to package directions. Drain, and rinse under cold water. Divide among 6 large soup bowls. Ladle Broth over noodles, and top with tofu, sprouts, watercress, and green onions. Serve cilantro, basil, and lime wedges on the side to be stirred into soup.

PER SERVING: 290 CAL; 16 G PROT; 5.5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT. FAT); 42 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 578 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

**FRENCH POTAGE WITH PISTOU**

Serves 8

In hospitals throughout France, meals always begin with potage, a blended vegetable soup of leeks, carrots, and potatoes. We've jazzed up the mild flavor with a quick pesto sauce that gets stirred in before serving.

- Potage**
- 2 Tbs. unsalted butter
  - 2 medium leeks, white and pale green parts chopped (4 cups)
  - ¼ cup dry white wine
  - 4 cloves garlic, minced (4 tsp.)
  - 1 large russet potato, peeled and diced (2 cups)
  - 4 medium carrots, chopped (3 cups)
  - 4 sprigs fresh thyme
  - 1 bay leaf
  - 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth

- Pistou**
- 1 cup firmly packed basil leaves
  - ¼ cup walnuts, toasted
  - 1 clove garlic, peeled
  - ¼ cup olive oil

1. To make Potage: Melt butter in large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks and pinch of salt; cover and cook 5 to 7 minutes, or until leeks are softened, stirring often. Stir in wine and garlic and cook, uncovered, 1 to 2 minutes, or until most liquid has evaporated.
2. Add potato, carrots, thyme, bay leaf, broth, and 2 cups water. Season with salt and pepper; cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 30 minutes, or until potato and carrots are soft.
3. Remove thyme sprigs and bay leaf. Purée soup in blender or food processor, or with immersion blender, until smooth. Season with salt and pepper.
4. To make Pistou: Place basil, walnuts, and garlic in blender. Pulse to combine. Pour in oil, and blend until smooth. Add water if necessary to form smooth paste. Season with salt and pepper. Serve dollop on top of Potage.

PER SERVING: 199 CAL; 3 G PROT; 12 G TOTAL FAT (3 G SAT. FAT); 22 G CARB; 8 MG CHOL; 295 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 6 G SUGARS

## MOROCCAN HARIRA

Serves 8 • Vegan

This traditional soup is thickened with a *tadouira*—a mixture of flour, tomato paste, and cilantro—and served with lemon wedges. Because of the vermicelli, the soup may thicken when cooled—simply add a little more water or broth when reheating.

### Harira

- ½ cup green lentils
- 1 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (2 cups)
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- ½ cup chopped cilantro
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 15-oz. can chopped tomatoes, drained, liquid reserved
- 2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- ½ cup vermicelli
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

### Tadouira

- 2 Tbs. all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- 2 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 Tbs. tomato paste

1. To make Harira: Cook lentils in pot of boiling salted water 2 minutes. Drain.
2. Heat oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onion, parsley, cilantro, ginger, and cinnamon; sauté 5 minutes, or until onion is soft. Stir in tomatoes, and sauté 5 minutes more.
3. Stir in broth, chickpeas, lentils, reserved tomato liquid, and 3 cups water. Season with salt and pepper, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 45 minutes, or until lentils are tender, stirring occasionally.
4. To make Tadouira: Whisk flour with 1 cup water in bowl. Whisk in cilantro, lemon juice, and tomato paste. Stir Tadouira and vermicelli into Harira, and cook 3 minutes, or until noodles are soft. Serve with lemon wedges.

PER SERVING: 179 CAL; 7 G PROT; 3 G TOTAL FAT (0.5 G SAT. FAT); 33 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 537 MG SOD; 6 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

## GREEK AVGOLEMONO SOUP

Serves 8

When reheating this soup, warm it over low heat without bringing it to a boil, to prevent the eggs from curdling.

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 medium leeks, white parts finely chopped (4 cups)
- 1 small onion, finely chopped (1 cup)
- 2 small carrots, peeled and diced (¾ cup)
- 6 cups no-chicken broth
- ½ cup orzo pasta
- 2 large eggs
- 3 Tbs. lemon juice
- ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh mint
- 1 Tbs. chopped fresh oregano
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

1. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks, onion, carrots, and pinch of salt; cover and cook 5 to 7 minutes, or until vegetables are softened, stirring often.
2. Stir in broth. Season with salt and pepper. Cover, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 10 minutes. Add orzo, and cook 11 minutes more, or until orzo is tender. Remove from heat.
3. Whisk together eggs and lemon juice in bowl. Add 3 ladles soup broth to egg mixture, whisking constantly. Whisk egg mixture back into soup, and cook over low heat 2 to 3 minutes, or until soup is thickened, but without letting it come to a boil. Serve sprinkled with parsley, mint, and oregano, and garnished with lemon wedges.

PER SERVING: 144 CAL; 5 G PROT; 5 G TOTAL FAT (1 G SAT. FAT); 21 G CARB; 53 MG CHOL; 528 MG SOD; 3 G FIBER; 5 G SUGARS

## NATIVE AMERICAN TOASTED-PECAN SOUP

Serves 10 • Vegan

This rich, creamy soup is a protein powerhouse that tastes like an elegant appetizer. Try it with walnuts, one of Weil's favorite healing foods.

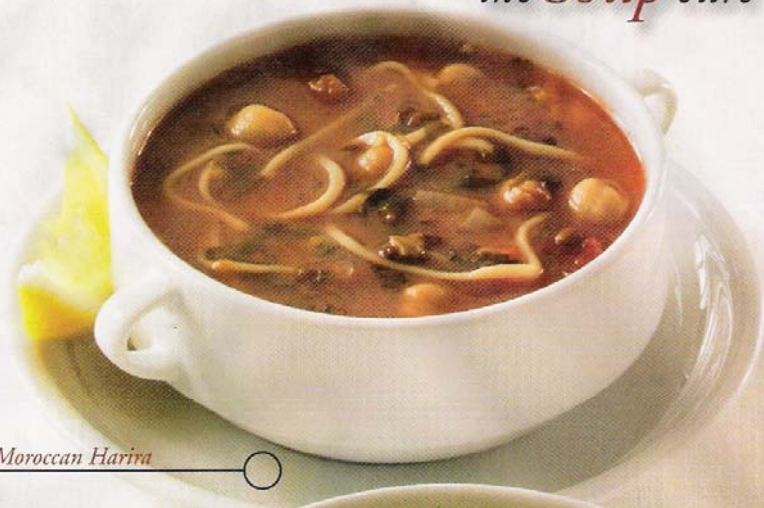
- 2½ cups pecans
- 2 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (2 cups)
- ¼ cup agave nectar or maple syrup
- 1 Tbs. chili powder
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (2 tsp.)
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup plain soymilk
- ½ cup shredded vegan Cheddar cheese, for garnish, if desired
- ¼ cup chopped green onions, for garnish, if desired

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spread pecans on baking sheet and toast 7 to 10 minutes, or until browned and fragrant. Cool 10 minutes, then coarsely chop.
2. Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion, and sauté 5 minutes, or until soft. Stir in 2 cups toasted pecans, agave nectar, chili powder, and garlic; cook 2 to 3 minutes, or until fragrant. Add broth, thyme, bay leaf, and 4 cups water, and season with salt and pepper. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer 2 hours.
3. Remove thyme sprigs and bay leaf, and purée soup in batches in blender until smooth. Return to pot, and stir in soymilk. Reheat soup, if necessary, and serve garnished with remaining ½ cup chopped pecans, cheese, and green onions, if desired.

PER SERVING: 268 CAL; 4 G PROT; 23 G TOTAL FAT (2 G SAT. FAT); 16 G CARB; 0 MG CHOL; 181 MG SOD; 4 G FIBER; 10 G SUGARS

**"Harira** is the tomato-based soup served in Morocco to break the fast each night during the 40 days of Ramadan," explains Nancy Harmon Jenkins, author of *The Mediterranean Diet Cookbook*. Because the soup is eaten on an empty stomach, it has to be hearty, but not heavy. "In our cultural experience, a tomato-based soup like harira may not be something we think of for breaking a fast," admits Weil. "But the lentils and chickpeas provide protein, while the spices and herbs stimulate circulation and digestion." Plus, the tomatoes and lemon juice offer a healthful dose of vitamin C.

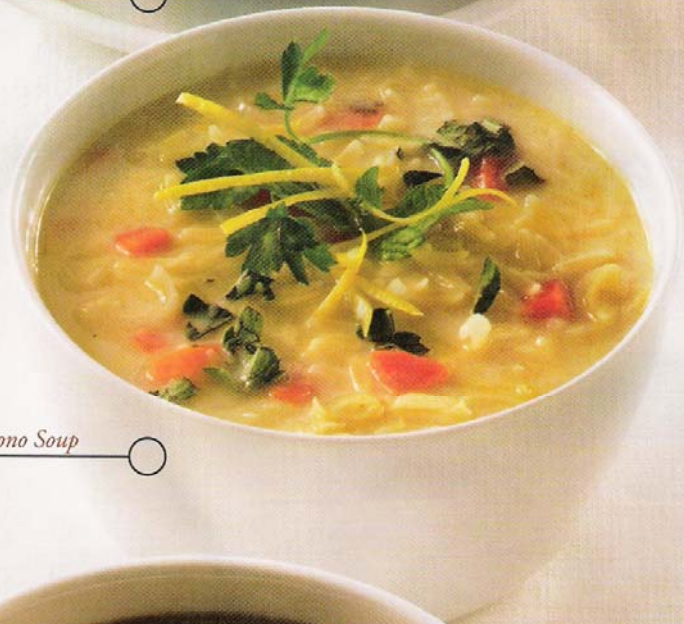
Moroccan Harira



**Avgolemono** (avgo: egg; lemono: lemon) soup is what a Greek mother or grandmother would make for a sick family member. Marks credits the fond memories summoned by a spoonful with part of the soup's healing powers. "Any food that is spiritually comforting helps the immune system," he says.

What with the vitamin C of the lemon and the soothing, easy-to-digest protein of the egg in avgolemono soup, it's easy to overlook the health benefits of the seasonings. Both mint and oregano contain rosmarinic acid, a compound that inhibits bronchial constrictors and helps ease respiratory complaints, according to Low Dog.

Greek Avgolemono Soup



**"Pecan soups** were frequently made by many indigenous peoples of North and South America," says Low Dog. "Pecans contain more than 19 vitamins and minerals and are heart-healthy because of the high amounts of fiber, vitamin E, and essential fatty acids." And for extra health benefits, spice up this simple soup with extra chili powder or even ground or whole dried chiles. "Chiles are the traditional remedy for clearing the sinuses and easing the symptoms of congestion and colds," Low Dog explains. "Also, chiles are rich in vitamin C, which helps the body absorb nonheme sources of iron available to vegetarians." ■

Native American Toasted-Pecan Soup

