

K's Kitchen: Not following directions ruins soup

By Kathryn Reed

You know it's not going to be a great meal when on the stove it doesn't taste good. It's not going to get any better on the table.



Oh, the hazards of not reading directions.

I called my sister, Pam, into the kitchen because I knew something was wrong with the soup. We added salt, garlic and basil. Not much better. We let it simmer. Still, not what I would call something all that good.

Oh well, it was time to eat and this is what was being served.

In talking over what went into the vegetable chowder either Mom or Pam asked about the fat that was in the soup. After all, it's fat (and usually a lot of it) that makes a cream soup so tasty. *Uh-oh*, I thought. I used nonfat milk. That was the problem.

The recipe calls for a quart of milk, saying lowfat is OK. This meant lowfat would be the minimum level. There's a tremendous amount of difference between lowfat and nonfat milk. In the case of this soup, it went from being barely edible to (probably) really yummy.

We got through the meal that night. But a pint of half-and-half was added to the pot the next day and left to simmer a

bit. Oh my, what a difference that fat makes.

Follow the directions, add a bit more butter (I needed to to cook the veggies) and up the fat content in the milk and this should be great to add to your soup recipe collection.

The recipe is from "The New Moosewood Cookbook" by Mollie Katzen. All the comments in the recipe are from the author.

Vegetable Chowder, 8 servings

Instead of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint heavy cream, as in the original version, this new light one has only 1 Tbs. butter, no cream, and the option of lowfat milk. It still tastes luxurious.

Try not to shy away from the full amount of garlic. It gives the soup a rich flavor and is surprisingly smooth and subtle.

1 T butter

2 C chopped onion

6 cloves garlic, minced

2 tsp thyme

2 tsp basil

1 medium potato, diced

2 medium stalks celery, diced

2 medium carrots, diced

2 C chopped broccoli

2 C chopped cauliflower

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb mushrooms, chopped

2 C corn (frozen-defrosted is fine)

Lots of fresh black pepper

1½ C water

1 quart milk (lowfat OK), heated

Optional: minced fresh herbs (chives, basil, marjoram)

Melt the butter in a kettle or Dutch oven. Add onion, half the garlic, salt, thyme, and basil. Sauté over medium heat 5 minutes. Add potato, celery, carrots, broccoli, and cauliflower. Sauté another 5 to 8 minutes. Add mushrooms and corn, plus lots of black pepper. Sauté another 8 to 10 minutes.

Add water, cover and simmer about 15 minutes, or until everything is tender. (Makes sure the potatoes are done.)

Stir in hot milk and remaining garlic. Remove from heat until about 10 minutes before serving time, then heat gently. Serve topped with freshly minced herbs.