

# K's Kitchen: Soup worth making every week

By Kathryn Reed

Some soups I can have night after night, week after week, winter after winter.



The one below that I got from my sister, Tami, is one of those soups. It's the splash of balsamic vinegar that makes this soup's flavor a bit unique. You would not want to serve it without the balsamic vinegar.

Tami got the recipe from the "Cooking Light Cookbook 1996" and apparently shared it with mom in Christmas 1998. I know this because my copy of it has mom's handwriting saying "Tami Christmas '98".

It was a good thing I had to call Tami to see where it originally came from because we started talking about other soup recipes. A new one will be in the mail to me soon.

Although the original recipe calls for chicken broth, I use vegetable broth for all my soups. I'm also trying to use more organic products. My friend Joy is the inspiration for that change in my eating habits. So, to that end, I could not find organic tortellini so I used ravioli. It worked, but my preference would be tortellini, right after my preference for organic.

"There is no doubt that organic food is better for the environment, but it's also better for your physique," says Cynthia Sass in the January-February 2012 issue of *Tennis* magazine. "Organic foods contain more antioxidants, which not only protect your cells from aging, inflammation and disease,

but may also make you leaner. In a recent study, University of Florida researchers found that people who consume more antioxidants had lower body mass indices, smaller waistlines, and lower body fat percentages than those with lower intakes, even though both groups consumed about the same number of daily calories. In addition, research shows that pesticide residues from conventionally grown foods may be a factor in rising obesity rates. If you can't go 100 percent, buy organic versions of the staple foods you eat most often, particularly such animal based foods as milk, eggs and meat."

I don't like store bought tomatoes this time of year so I thawed a packet of tomatoes. These were from the summer farmers' market that I had stewed in a crock pot and then froze for occasions like this.

Tami can't always get fresh basil in the tiny Minnesota town she lives in, so she uses dried when she has to.

I tend to double the recipe because we like it so much.

### **Tortellini-Basil Soup**

4 C canned low-sodium chicken broth, undiluted

1 (9 oz.) package fresh cheese-filled tortellini, uncooked

1 (15-oz.) can cannellini beans, drained

1 C chopped tomato

$\frac{1}{2}$  C shredded fresh basil

2 T balsamic vinegar

$\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt

$\frac{1}{3}$  C freshly grated Parmesan cheese

$1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp freshly ground pepper

Bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini, and cook 6 minutes or until tender. Stir in beans and tomato. Reduce heat, and simmer 5 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

Remove from heat; stir in basil, vinegar, and salt.

Ladle soup into individual bowls; sprinkle evenly with cheese and pepper.