

Split Pea Soup

<http://userealbutter.com/2015/01/15/split-pea-soup-recipe/>
from *Fine Cooking*

1 1/2 lbs. ham hocks (I used 1/2 lb. ham bone and 1 1/2 cups chopped ham)
1 lb. (about 2 1/4 cups) green or yellow split peas, picked over
1 medium leek, white and light green parts chopped
1 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped (or 1 1/2 tsp dried)
1 large dried bay leaf
1 1/2 tsps olive oil, plus 1 tbsp olive oil if using pressure cooker
2 medium onions, 1/2-inch dice
kosher salt
3 medium carrots, 1/2-inch dice
3 stalks celery, 1/2-inch dice
freshly ground black pepper
1/8 tsp cayenne
1/8 tsp ground cloves
1/4 cup fresh flat-leaf (Italian) parsley, chopped
squeeze of lemon juice to taste (optional, but good!)

Rinse the ham hocks (or ham bone) and peas with water. Place the ham hocks (or bone) and peas in a stock pot or pressure cooker with 15 cups of water. Bring the water to a boil over high heat and skim off any foam that forms. Reduce to a simmer and add the leek, thyme, and bay leaf. If using a conventional stock pot, simmer for 90 minutes. If using a pressure cooker, add a tablespoon of olive oil to the water (to prevent excessive foaming) and cook on high for 6-8 minutes (Level 2 on my Fagor Duo pressure cooker) and then allow to release naturally.

Meanwhile, in a large sauté pan or stock pot, heat 1 1/2 tablespoons of olive oil over medium high flame. Sauté the onions with 1/2 teaspoon of salt for 5 minutes until they brown around the edges. Reduce the flame to low and cover the pan, stirring occasionally until the onions become tender (about 15 minutes). Stir in the celery and carrots, cooking them for about 15 minutes with an occasional stir to prevent burning.

When the ham and peas are done cooking, remove the ham hocks or ham bone to a plate. Place the sautéed vegetables in the soup (including any scraped brown bits from the pan). Stir 1 teaspoon of salt, 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, the ground cloves, and the cayenne into the soup. Simmer the soup for 20 minutes. While that simmers, remove any meat from the ham hocks or ham bones and dice it. My ham bone didn't have a lot of meat, so I chopped some ham slices (not deli, but spiral ham or country ham) to make up for it. Turn off the heat on the soup and discard the bay leaf. Stir in the parsley. Using an immersion blender (or you can blender your soup carefully in a regular blender or a food processor in batches), purée the soup until smooth (or slightly chunky – I like chunky). Add the meat to the soup and simmer for 10 minutes. Add a squeeze of lemon juice (or more) to taste. Serves 8.