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For Immediate Release

Soup Weather is Finally Here

Late fall and early winter can really start to bring on the winter blues. The time has changed back so our evenings are spent entirely in the dark. The leaves are falling, and the smell of fall is in the air. For some that can be a bit daunting, but for me, I'm excited for the change. Not only will we be able to enjoy the warmth of our fireplace but it's finally the perfect time of year to make soup. Soup is one of my favorite meals. It helps to heat up the house and even when our kids were home, there were always leftovers for the next day. Soup is just one of the positives this time of year.

When our kids were in school, there was one elementary class that would read the book "Stone Soup" and then make soup as a class. The storybook is about a group of travelers that stop at a poor village. They are very hungry but none of the villagers have enough food to share with them. The travelers start to boil some rocks and ask each villager for one item to add to the pot. They ask one for a carrot and one for a potato and on and on until they have a big batch of soup. Then they shared the soup with all the villagers.

The teacher would read the book and ask each of the students to bring one ingredient to school. They would then make soup as a class. This was always a fun lesson for them. They would talk and speculate about what grocery item they would be asked to bring. What a great lesson on how we can all do one small part and together we can make a big impact. Sometimes we would make soup like that at home. Just add a mixture of ingredients and see what it turns out like. Soup is super easy though; you just can't get it wrong.

Do you have a favorite soup? The one that you wait for all year until it finally freezes so you can make it. The one you have all the ingredients ready to go but were just waiting for the cold weather?

Mine is chili with cornbread. I start making chili one evening but we don't eat it that night. We all know that chili is better the second day. The favorite in my house is a chili and cornbread casserole. It's so simple, it's just chili in a casserole dish with cornbread batter on top. You bake it until the cornbread is done. The chili gets all warm and bubbly and the cornbread is golden brown and steaming. Yum! I eat it just like that, but my husband and kids slather it in honey. It's good we have a large supply of honey on hand, thanks to our hard-working bees.

Our family chili night menu would be a great subject to cover in a County Fair class called "Occasion Menu". It is under the Culinary Challenge division. The created menu has to include all food groups and must have a fun topic or occasion for the meal. The chili casserole already includes proteins, vegetables, and grains. Pair that with a bowl of ice cream with strawberries and you have a family fun night meal. To enter the project at the fair, members would need to make a display board that includes the menu with recipes and a fun story about the meal. If you are interested in this class or any other classes at the fair, reach out to your local extension office for more information. 4-H enrollment is now open, reach out to us if you need any assistance enrolling your children or grandchildren in 4-H. 4-H is open to youth ages 5-18. You can call us at the Buffalo County Extension Office, 236-1235, visit our website <https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/buffalo/> or reach out to me at, hdarby2@unl.edu.

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