

# PRAISE FOR MELANIE LUTZ

“A breathtaking soup-de-force.”

THRIFT LOVE

“Take the soup. Leave the cannoli. Perfect cookbook for those who believe food is more than just sustenance. It's storytelling, connection, and a way to savor life itself. Whether you're an avid home cook, a lover of Mediterranean culture, or simply someone who enjoys a good tale told over a hearty meal, *Everything is Soup* will nourish your spirit of adventure, as you discover ingredients for the soul.”

CULINARY KITCHEN

“It's my new soup-osophy. If good food and cuddly reminiscences are an important part in your life you'll love Melanie Lutz's *Everything is Soup*.”

MARIA @ DD

“Mel is a true rising star for nourishing the soul. Recipes are simple and easy to follow filled with a a lot of love and spirit of adventure.”

WE BELONG CLUB

“Heart felt soup recipes intertwine in a collection of warm-hearted Sicilian stories celebrating food, family, and the magic of everyday moments. With a mix of humor, wisdom, and a dash of old-world charm, this book invites you into bustling kitchens where generations gather, laughter spills like olive oil, and every simmering pot holds a lesson about love, resilience, and joy.”

CHEF JOANNE

“You can feel, taste, and even smell the wisdom and nourishment in this soup lover cookbook.”

HOLLYWOOD ORCHARD

“Soup is the universal language of love, with the power to build bridges, create connection and nourish the heart and soul of every one, everywhere. Mel relates a love of creating connections with the foods accompanying moments of memory.”

BIG BRO

“Delightful memoir, manifesto, and easy to follow cookbook. It’s about the lessons we learn in the kitchen and at the table—the flavors of love, the spice of rebellion, and occasional spicy regrets.”

COOKBOOK KITCHEN

**EVERYTHING IS SOUP**



# **EVERYTHING IS SOUP**

SICILIAN WISDOM, NOURISHMENT AND RECIPES FOR A  
DELICIOUS LIFE

**MELANIE LUTZ**



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Biography & Autobiography / Culinary

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Biography & Autobiography / Personal Memoirs

*The intent of the author is to offer delicious recipes and insights to make loving, nourishing soups. Our hope is the soup made and shared will provide comfort for emotional and spiritual well-being to heal the soul of our worlds for peace on earth.*

*Some names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved. Recipes have been divined through the fire of perseverance, instinct, and what grows in the garden. Lean into your intuition. Experiment as needed and don't be afraid of a substitution.*

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*“O mangi questa minestra o salti dalla finestra.”*

*Either eat the soup or  
Throw yourself out the window.*

*Take it or leave it.*

*To my Nonnas, Grandmothers, Great Grandmothers, Pap,  
Mom, Dad, Uncles, Cousins, Big Bro, my Fam Fam and my dear Aunties  
who taught me to make cooking and life an expression of pure joy.*





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*"Sicilians build things like they will live forever  
and eat like they will die tomorrow."*

*— Plato*



# SOUP IS LIFE

Every soup maker and soup lover knows deep in their soul, love is the first ingredient. Everything added after that builds on it as the power of fire, a vessel, and a few ingredients allow constellations of universes to blossom through one of the oldest cooking techniques on earth. Soup is a soulful process of creating, brewing, serving and enjoying the very waters of our being.

Soup making isn't about precision, it's about tasting, adjusting as needed for resonant harmony and delicious satisfaction.

Soup allows mysteries to unfold. From the freshest sun kissed farm grown vegetables to the moldy oldie onion in the back of the fridge, and perhaps a wilting 'dead' carrot or two will never fail to lead you through the rabbit hole of multi-dimensional alchemical connection across time and space, meeting in a big beautiful pot of joy, bubbling happily away on the stove. To those of you who have joined me in a soup circle, and those who are about to become part of a growing movement, may you remember the beauty of a lifetime is found in nourishing each other's hearts, minds, and bellies. It is mutual aid, community care and an age old process of feeding each other. In this, there is nothing more magical than conjuring delicious, hunger quenching imaginings made manifest through realizing a perfect, loving, oh so tasty, bowl of soup.

A pinch of love, a dash of rebellion, a simmering pot of wisdom passed down through generations—this is how we heal ourselves, how we stir the pot for good. Sometimes it's rich and comforting like a stew, other times it's spicy, and occasionally, you wonder, how the hell you pulled off the most beautiful marriage of ingredients.

This is a realistic story of the power of our immigrant family thriving in North Eastern Pennsylvania where every spoonful carries the memory, love, and a little bit of pot clanking chaos. From soup-stained hand written recipes, family kitchens, to the radical

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warmth of gourmet club community table, where the only rule was, you had to serve something you never cooked before, expanding our ability to grow through cooking for and with each other. These stories and recipes remind us food is more than sustenance, it is a revolution of the heart.

Soup nourishes. It is what it does.

When we say everything is soup it is a call and a response. It is the whimsical nature of pure possibilities. A soup connects, feeds, and delivers on a promise. Here we have the linkage to the pottage of purest earth magic.

Folks don't know where their food comes from. There has been a disconnection between the land we love and the way we move in the world. These necessary medicines, FOOD, growing on trees, is the siren call begging us to reconnect. Food *literally* grows on trees for our foundational health and wellness born from the biome.

Sicilians remain an unbroken chain of passionate reconnection to the land. Give us some beans and we'll create magic and miracles. We want you to enjoy the recipes across time and space, to be in the deep river of intertwined destinies.

Spirit breathes peace of mind, body and soul in the presence of soup making. The moment we put the pot on a burner and turn it on, the stove becomes a transportation device for worlds as yet unexplored.

Within recipes discovered, some easy to make, others born from what our body craves, what it needs to flourish, we share soup origin stories, traditions of Sunday dinners, reunions on the farm, healing broken places, picking up interconnections, bringing together neighbors, friends and strangers, to grow loving networks.

Lavender and mint torn from plants in the garden, muddled in rough farmer's hands tossed into hot water made a soothing herbal tea for community care and brought me to the center of my being. All honor and glory goes to John Allen and Bella LaNestour for building the first urban ecosystem restoration camp in my Beachwood Canyon neighborhood, known as The Bird House. Inspiration reborn. Tomatoes, a mulberry tree, and squash growing in the garden bathed in dappled sunlight, harvested, processed and cooked into delicious meals. Nasturtiums turned into nutty, pesto-flavored soup with cashew milk — a direct act of regeneration with nature, from the land to our stomachs — invigorating our chakra systems and honoring our incarnation.

Earth energies are a constant broadcast. As we enter seasons of repair for soul/soil ecosystems to be enriched, we dance in collaboration with this eternal melody, we are changed by it, just as winds and rivers flow, as birds and bees move about their work, and we are better for it. This is the energetic relationship at the core of biophilia, the love of all living things, where we know all time is now. Cultivating the conditions for life. This in turn allows our humanness to express its wonder to thrive and survive in balance and respect.

Reconnecting to this vessel of life in the heat of transformation is what soup teaches us.

If you make a 'misstep' a mistake in your soup making. It is always an opportunity to go again. Use your sense of taste, you've added too much spice, like one time, I went to shake red pepper flakes into my pot and there was no lid, causing a giant lump of hot red flakes to dump into my soup. Not everyone can handle the heat. It's helpful to learn how to work with your mistakes and not be derailed. Too spicy, add ingredients to dilute the heat or neutralize the spice, perhaps a dairy, like sour cream or yogurt, or an acidic ingredient like lemon juice or vinegar, helps. Alternatively, you can add sweetness with sugar or honey, or thicken soup with starch. Add your ingredients. Open up different recipes, experiment. It's all a big existential soup we drop through, swirl around, and emerge transformed from the deep vortex of the bowl. Learn to keep it moving, season to taste and shift and change if you have gone off course. You learn by living. Don't stop loving.

'I am safe' is the form of a bowl of soup under a shamanic full harvest moon where red peppers sparkle on the vine, calling out to be tossed into a campsite chicken soup. Spicy hot ones healing. Breaking up what is ailing, healing parts of us, clearing trauma, regenerating systems at a cellular level.

For many reasons, we have questioned, wondered, been amazed at, the idea of how 'people' came to be. Like, one day, after millions, really, an infinity of years, Earth said...

'Yeah, a person. A human.'

'Oh, really.'

'Yeah. People.'

Enlightenment, words, forms, light language morphed from consciousness.

"We are people born from primordial soup."

Beyond the garden of eden, Eve and Adam, the mysticism of the Lumarians, the wonder and purpose of evolution, the Big Bang, etc. etc. and whatnot. Nothing captures the feel of our yearning to drop through imaginal soup transformed than the story of *the Marching of the Octopuses*. Documented by a consortium of biologists watching patterns of octopuses one after another, for weeks, each octopus left the water and started 'walking' into the town square, seemingly headed toward the local pub in a small seaside UK town. These octopus emerged via an impulse to leave the ocean. The theory of 'walking out of the sea' brings me to this thought, always fascinating... Octopuses have arms and intelligence and empathy and like to form communities. The impulse to leave the water and begin to move onto land, is an activation, octopus were coming out of the ocean and 'walking' into town a few blocks. Perhaps for a pint at the local pub, to listen to the keening cry at a good ole fashioned wake. In this flash of inspiration a blink of an Octopus eye, shared like a science class professor, in a cadence drone, 'all life springs from primordial soup.'

An ancient melody calls us to the awareness of who we are.

Up to 60% of the human adult body is water. According to Mitchell and others, the brain and heart are composed of 73% water, and the lungs are about 83% water. Skin contains 64% water, muscles and kidneys are 79%, and even the bones are watery at 31%.

Some folks call the human body over our eternal soul the meat suit, but to me, it is a soupy fashionista lewk, where every street is a catwalk of personality.

Italian words for soup are minestra, zuppa, and brodo. The word "minestra" means (big) "soup" in Sicilian, as the word "zuppa" translates to "soup" in Italian. And brodo. Well, brodo is a clear soup, as one of my Uncles used to say...

"Clarity. Clarity. Clarity. To make a good brodo you must learn to speak with intention. The brodo of a life well lived."

Soup is the great frontier, the catchall of the promised deliciousness of a trip to the farm, the 'what do you need' grocery store stop, or the super exhausted after a walk of shame 'what's left in the fridge' minestra. It's what happens when worlds collapse into themselves, giving up what we hold onto with a death grip and falling into the primordial soup of transformation. It's what collects in the great recesses of the fridge crying out to be something, to be used. To know its worth and to collaborate with others to be of service.

We are going to discuss the joy of minestra, thick soup, often vegetable-based, which could also include pasta or grains. Is pasta a soup? Yes. Glad you asked. Yes it is. Minestra can also refer to "dry" soups like pasta dishes. We are not sure where we fall on placing pasta on the dry soup spectrum but we remain souper fans.

**Saying zuppa**, is pure joy. Zuppa could also refer to tomato or fish soups.

If it makes you happy, yell it out... Let's make ZUPPA!

The clarity and presence of a brodo, a clear soup, brings a certain rustic elegance to divinely align and elevate our essential purpose.

Dive head first into the ultimate soup healer, Sicilians Heal with Love (Minestra di pollo) Chicken soup or my dad's favorites **minestrone**, a thick vegetable soup, which had to include zucchini (for him) and a tomato based **pasta e fagioli**. Our family likes to add sausage, sweet or spicy, depending on guests and family's level of spice tolerance. You do you.

Italian's trash talk, tease each other, laugh, thrill and care for each other. It is a love, close family bond, unlike any other. We are a bunch of jibrones with lots of joy and mirth in sharing. We'll go to the ends of the earth to support the family, until kindness is disrespected, and then like my dear friend Donna likes to say, "you are dead to me."

There were some soup sayings, as kids, we didn't understand.

"Never dip your spoon in another man's soup."

We thought it was double dipping aka keep your germies to yourself. No going back into the pot or bowl with the same spoon. Some of the family never learned to stop the

double dip. Ahhhh. The fam. We all got better at using fresh clean spoons and not going back in as we grew older. It took someone pointing it out for us to grow.

The purpose of cooking soup is to share love, to feed our bodies, to have a good time and most importantly to laugh heartily, loudly and with pure glee to allow the offering to become the best medicine.

Soup is a prolific teacher because it's watery goodness soothes our bodies and mind. It promotes stillness, slow going, warming, and allows us to be in service to each other. We infuse it with our intentions and the energies of what we include in the pot.

Soup making is resilience, accessibility, and every stir is a spell growing in intention.

Soup returns us to the land. It sustains the wisdom sharing of our grandmothers that could have disappeared toward the final part of the 20th century into scientific, pharmaceutical containers. Instead our 21st century work continues a long tradition of land enrichment, herbal remedies, freedom fighting, soup kitchens, and feeding folks in service of our collective humanity.

Some of the recipes come from my parents, some from my Uncles, some from my Aunties, from digital files transferred haphazardly, and in laughs, full of mischief and guts. Others from my travels, with the force of a Sicilian warrior in lipstick and boots roaring around the countrysides.

Magnificent hearts beat throughout this cookbook.

Recipes from different sources with one focus: Love.

Love to support your family

Love to express your self.

Love to free your soul's purpose.

Love to remember

Everything is soup

For better days

For community

For friendship

And family.

Maybe you will feel the call of the ancestors to recreate a recipe from your history, heritage, culture or to make a soup you've never had before based on a favorite vegetable growing robustly in your garden. This occurred to me when a particularly robust cabbage head at a farmers market table stall got a bit cheeky. The way of soup worries not, it forages and delivers for those who dare to dream into action a pot of liquid love bubbling and boiling into soup.

Some people say it's the ingredients, others say it's the technique. When you understand everything is soup, you are liberated. There is no right or wrong in preparing soup, everything is a possibility of soup. The magic emerges in the care, temperature and ease

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brought to bear. When you tap into the ideas of everything is soup, you come to a knowing— delicious is born from experimentation, and listening to your environments.

What is cared over, and prepared becomes soul enriching. A well-set table (as humble a setting as a folded napkin and a fork), or use of a tiny fairy napkin holder, can be the crowning touch to a satisfying soup meal, one that feeds all the senses.

Wherever you come from, whatever traditions were handed down to you, however you arrived at your favorite soup recipes, we would love for you to consider 'roots' from a different POV, as you dive deeply into the ideas and sharing, as everything, everything, everything becomes a wonderfully inspired world onto itself as a bowl of soup ignites the imagination co-creating elegant experiences.

Soup work returns me to an eternal connection with the earth, its charms and all of you.

"The only thing wrong with her soup was there was never enough," echoes across time and space.

Grab a seat around our family table. Pick up your spoon. Imagine the friends you will serve in connection and community. Consider this your invitation to develop, invent, experiment with your soup pot as a way to love your neighbors as an extension of your desires and passion.

We are keepers of the traditions.

Soup making is how some of us love ourselves. Soup serving is how we love others. When you are cooking for those you love. You want them to feel your love.

Like Snoop, I'd like to thank myself for this. I've worked super hard to be this magnificent, to share what I know, to be kind, to be true, to be just. Everyday I wake up with the commitment to have this day be more loving than yesterday, to uplift my friends and family with good ingredients, to remind of our earth's pure potential, to love the land in harmony and honor my ancestors with each loving action. While I go through ups and downs, what brings me comfort is the process and practice of trying. Having a routine, something new, gratitude Fridays, to celebrate something borrowed, something gifted, to join in the majesty of something old, respecting our big blue wonderful planet.

I love soup. It is everything.

May each of us find eternal comfort and care in these 'Everything is Soup' stories and recipes.

Thank you for the grit and grace, the love and care of celebrating how much we've been given. You are in charge of how delicious your life (and soup) will become.

Bacioni a tutti.

# STORIES + RECIPES



# CHAPTER 1 EVERYTHING. MY DEAR. IS SOUP.

THERE ARE sweet come to Jesus moments in every Sicilian family offered as blessings.

*“O mangi questa minestra o salti dalla finestra.”*

*Translated: Either eat the soup or throw yourself out the window.*

*Take it or leave it.*

We learn, sometimes the hard way, sometimes with great love to choose nourishment.

Follow the wishes your heart makes.

Enjoy your daily bread.

And, to always,

EAT YOUR SOUP.

Lutz, is a shortened form of our patriarchal surname, Luzzi, changed when our Great Grandfather Anthony, made his way through Ellis Island onward to settle into the Pocono Mountains in the town of Freeland in Luzerne County. Anthony was a passionate man of faith. He met and married Maria Ferrari. Together, they birthed thirteen children, which we refer to as, the *whole lotta Lutzes of North Eastern Pennsylvania*. This cookbook is a blend of the grace of our matriarchal lineage and the swagger of my grandfather, James Bernard Lutz, who had five boys, with his wife, Thelma. One who died and the remaining four they referred to as ‘da Boyz.’

I’m grateful to be a part of an interconnected, tapestry of passionate Italians full of wit, wisdom and the never ending joy of eating, cooking and regenerating the love of our lands. I grew up watching my Mom and Grandmothers cook for the family as a testament to love, standing on business and laughter as the best medicine. Our Great Grandmother, Maria made a powerful sisterhood of traditions, herbal folk knowledge, medicinal uses of food and the miraculous energetics held within earth’s bounty. This embedded knowl-

edge met beautiful souls throughout my life who added their wisdom, keeping alive our families matriarchal lineage of long held healing traditions.

Wisdom poured from cooking and feeding a huge family. Laughs were a consequence of tight budgets and the immigrant work ethic at the heart of our quirky crew making their way in America. This sacred precious kitchen time is where I learned to value collaboration. Everyone and everything had something to contribute.

There was one pot most used in our kitchens. It happened to be the biggest pot. The soup pot. Being asked to grab the soup pot from the wooden cupboard where it was kept was a right of passage. Like the transcendent opening of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*— *Double, double toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble*— from the Song of the Witches, you felt the power as the pot was put on the heat and the fire was turned on.

The cauldron, or calderone, a melting pot, where different ingredients became something greater, together. The collaborations and sharing of our farm to table neighborhoods. Whoever had the bounty would offer it up for dinner.

Soup making is spell casting. Improvisation. It's setting an intention, opening your heart to activate, pouring in the waters, and stirring the ingredients until they are transformed.

*Fire. Boil. Toil. Trouble. Be gone.*

*Stir. Love. Taste. Adjust. Serve. Share.*

Spell casting. Fresh ingredients from the garden, from the butcher, from the farmers, from the stores, the fish monger. Inner heat ablaze in the fire of purification. Alchemizing. Caramelizing. Marrying through the toil and troubles into complete nourishment. The care and cuddles, the chopping, and all the joys of the kitchen. The talks, harmony and power of making delicious bowls of soup, stews, minestrone, full of nutrients, full of the garden's blessings, full of herbs and like a witch's brew, boiled, toiled, troubled over, prayers up with each spiraling stir of the wooden spoon. Everything coming together in the soup of creation.

My brother, in one of our frequent phone calls to check in.

"Was on a Zoom explaining and pitching my Innovation Studio AI Tech Architecture where everyone thrives to folks, all the super flowing metro systems, tapping our most powerful human skill, creativity, with ease and grace. Cause, you know, I can't finance development infrastructure myself, and as I pitch, hoping, if they could only understand they would give me funds. I remind myself what you like to say, Mel... *'Everything is soup.'* And I know it is going to be okay."

"Wait. What?!"

"Everything is soup."

"Did I say that?"

"Yes."

"Well, that's not mine. It's from Pap. From the picnic tables at the farm, the kitchen

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

table, during big satisfying meals. Our connection to our extended ginormous Italian family. He said it"

"Well. It brings me comfort."

"Yes, it does."

The electricity of connection and intuition, comfort, a past pure memory sitting next to my Grandfather, who we endearingly called Pap, at the kitchen table as a kid, dunking my butter laden crust of broken bread into roasted tomato soup forgetting completely we were supposed to use a spoon. He would smile, spoon in hand, reach over and tap the rim of my bowl making a ringing tinker bell sound...

"One day you'll know this with your whole heart.

Everything. My Dear.

Everything. Is soup.

At the end of the day, everything, is soup."

He'd laugh this maniacal, cracked the case, solved the murder mystery, rippling throughout the universe, cackling laugh.

"No matter what ails you, how bad things may seem, everything can be solved over a bowl of soup with family."

I'd later learn, dining with ones family, friends who became family, strangers who became besties, and random strangers in need, blows your heart wide open to the universal secrets, the Akashic Records, the way we manifest our deepest most connected heart songs through the peace and comfort of time together talking, eating, laughing over bowls of soup at long welcoming tables.

*"Soup. Everything, my dear, is soup."*

A bowl of soup to me is a bowl of love. Made, curated, chopped into existence, bloomed with aromatics, oils and herbs and spices, with the very water that sustains us and surrounds us. The waters of our destiny. Every pot giving birth to something magical. A powerful spell. A vehicle we take through the enchanted echoes of a whippoorwill buzzing the winds of memory. All of it wrought, fraught and brought to bear in the making of soup. Where we learned recipes for what has grown to become a delicious life.

Everything around us can be turned into soup.

We crave more liquid, not less.

Earth is covered in more water than land, we live in a large planetary soup.

Soup is often a kids first brush of learning to cook with your very soul, where your vibratory being aligns with your eternal inner power. It tastes so good.

Sicilians have a tendency to lean into one strength and use it tirelessly to the bitter end, a certain single focus of function, like Abraham Maslow's law of the instruments, "it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail." Which I learned in spades when someone gifted me an immersion blender and I got the

fever of which Bree Wilson speaks, “to the woman who owns an immersion blender, the whole world is soup.”

The bitter end is a nautical term for a rope at the end of its bitts, completely run out. The bitter end marks the limit. At the bitter end, you have a choice. You can curl up, turn around and go home, or you can expand your skill set, stepping out on a new course. You can remain curious, step through your fear and transform bitterness. Bitterness in cooking is a healing energetic, it wakes you up, stimulating your gastrointestinal tract. Bitter ingredients and flavors revitalize our systems, boosting the production of saliva as well as digestive juices in the stomach, liver, gall bladder, pancreas and intestines. Bitterness is a helper.

One souper concept never has a bitter end, it is used over and over again. It sustains burning, high heat, temperamental conditions, with no judgment, it waits for the call of duty. It is the vessel through which we make soup, the pot, the cauldron, Calderone. The pottage. The big ole souper pot. Interestingly, the word "Minestrone" itself implies a "big soup." To those who understand its deeper magic, this is a loving soup pot, a vortex portal between the world we see and the one we feel into, opening, opening opening us to the connection with all that is.

Long before empires rose and fell, when humankind first put flame to water creating food harmony, the pot was celebrated as an alchemist's tool. The pot as cauldron transformed cooking from mere heating to the marriage of flavors, where onions hold whispers of aromatics, kissing flavors into beans, and carrots melting into nothingness lending sweetness to tough meats.

Holes dug in heated earth, an underground 'oven' heated food in the beginning, then folks developed clay containers to heat water and ingredients, making way for forged metal pots. The first metal ones showed up in ancient Mesopotamia around 4500 BC. They were precious copper things, shaped by blacksmiths who knew how to turn earth and flame into a cooking instrument. These weren't everyday tools; they were miracles of metal, the first shimmering tools of food transformation. The word "pot" wouldn't come along until nearly five thousand years later, around 1180 AD, but, the act of gathering around heat to cook up something had already begun. From those early copper pans to the great bronze cauldrons of the Bronze Age, into the Middle Ages, our ancestors stirred the first soup pots feeding civilization.

The pot is both nurturing and pleasure giving. It knows the way to transform not only food, but the cook who tends it. It is eternal. A soup pot is a companion, holding not just your ingredients, but your intentions, stirring courage, seasoning hope, and ladling love.

In the beginning of cooking pot times when boiling water over the fire became a way through, folks used a simple wood stick, probably a nice branch from a tree to stir what was in the boiling, steaming, cauldron. This stick eventually turned into what we know as the classic wooden spoon, allowing stirring without burning the hands. Today wooden

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spoons are found in nearly every kitchen. The tools are simple. Water. Pot. Fire. Spoon. Ingredients. Used in endless combinations to create something wondrous. The stir brings clarity of purpose. Stirring clockwise amplifies molecular motion creating a vortex enhancing the intention by charging the water (H<sub>2</sub>O). The spell of speaking into your soup spiral, creates sound waves and micro-vibrations imprinting the liquid's molecular bonds in a process as old as the impulse to stir. This sonic structuring bonds with the frequency of your words moves the water and embeds information. Keep speaking love, power, joy into your soup as you stir the ingredients.

While the pot is the portal to make soup over fire. What surrounds you and brings you pleasure is the work of improvisation. Sweet, sensual nectarines cooked in your pot on the stove becomes jam. It is what toasty bread lovers call an unctuous spreading 'soup.' Watermelon grown on the farm becomes a 'cold liquid' loving soup offering. Life's mornings when the sun rises become a collaboration with the land, local ecosystems, what grows seasonally, and what is most alive to our foundational well being.

Many older recipes from my Uncle Bud or GiGi (Great Grandmother Maria) called for 'mangoes' when really what they meant was green peppers. Giardiniera, a medley of colorful, seasonal vegetables, including peppers, preserved in a tangy vinegar brine is known in Italy as verdure sottaceto ("vegetables under vinegar"), traditionally served as an antipasto to spark the appetite. Oddly I did feel the heat of shame not knowing what mangoes in the recipes meant. Reaching out to my cousin Marcy to get permission to use a photo of her Dad, our Uncle Gene (p. 60) she mentioned the reference in passing.

Yes. Yes. Please use the picture. And, mangoes refers to green peppers. Pap used to call everything a mango. He even used to call us mangoes I don't know if you remember.

I don't. That is hilarious. He was so funny. He used to say to me, 'Everything, my dear, is soup.'

It goes way back to immigrants in Pennsylvania who used "mango" as a catch all word for pickled things.

Pickled peppers were Mangoes.

Pickled cucumbers were Mangoes.

Basically, if it fit in a jar, it was a mango.

Wow. I didn't know that. That's amazing. Thank you.

Wouldn't it be nice to have a cousins reunion. Doubt it will ever happen but would be nice.

Would love it.

The power of cousin connections came through. We do nothing on our own. We have

support. Invisible, loving support across time, space and place. This too is a kind of soupy love and understanding. Additional perspectives, a fuller picture of the fam fam and the basis of where 'everything is soup' originated and to a certain extent, why, the pure pleasure of aligning with your people brings us peace. It is said in indigenous practices and constellation work, there are seven generations represented to get a holistic view for harmony and healing, revealing the eternal patterns of existence. Familial consciousness shows up through the form of this constellation work. A representative healing is available in understanding and sharing of stories in a lineage through ancient technologies like constellation work, where our projections are allowed to be known, understood and aligned in our highest form.

Everything is soup is a gateway reconstructor in an ever changing world where realities are created by our point of view and experiences. Miracles are shifts in our perceptions from fear to love and every moment we bring love to any situation is a miracle.

Enter the hearty *Stairway to Heaven* of Sicilian traditions. From peasant soup recipes to feed big families to elaborate garden to table inspired elegance in a bowl to those twenty minute quick soups. Find your way in this portal of magic and miracles to bring yourself home to love.



Soups are everywhere, including the expansion of soup thought into the power of juicing, pickling, canning, tea making, jam. Enjoy the basics, the classic tools, the simple and artful way of soup. Allow your loving experiments to enrich your community.

Allow yourself to cook in precious wild wonders of earth spells flowing from your abundant pottage vessel, your big soup pot, dutch oven, crockpot, whatever you got. Delight your neighborhood in your willingness to go with the soup flow. Explore the energies available and know the end is never the end. Now is always the time to work with what you've been given, to begin again.

Pull out the cauldron. Grab a spoon. Gather your ingredients. Fill your pot with love and put it on the fire. Bring to a boil. Stir with grace. Bask in soup is life power. Sit down at the table. Tear off a hunk of bread, and join the revolution.

Here's to the laughter, joy and soul stirring moments of pure bliss about to come together as you gather around the table to experience the profound vortex of beautiful bowls of minestra.

Sharing soup and stories is how we heal, together.

Ease your mind, rest what is weary, put on your favorite tunes and know, soup is everything, and, Everything is soup.

Grateful you've found us.





## CHAPTER 2

# NONNA IS ALWAYS RIGHT

# ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

“OPPOSITES ATTRACT. Like Nick and Marisa. He’s 5’6” she’s 6’ he couldn’t grow a mustache she has three.”

My grandmother had this way of making dead pan, off hand observations as she chopped and prepped for dinner.

“What are you making today, Nonna?”

“Gonna make Italian wedding soup. We have some beautiful Escarole from the farm.”

“What’s that?”

“Leafy greens. Very, very, tough like my mother, Cecilia. We boil, first. It’s beautiful, you’ll love it.”

“Holding it together, like the force of nature she is.”

“Gotta cut it, and then wash it, and bring to a boil.”

She smiles.

“Don’t forget, wash two times, one wash gets any bugs, second wash clears any dirt.”

“Okay.”

“Escarole is an integral part of Italian Wedding Soup and, of course, your papa’s favorite, pasta e fagioli. But, we aren’t making that today.”

“When did you learn how to make Italian wedding soup?”

“Maria taught me. This soup is born here in America. Made to adapt to new lands.”

“Are you gonna use chicken for the soup?”

“Yeah. Yes. Pollastro, pollastro. We soak it in water first. Then put in celery and onion. Little salt. Boil for a wee bit of an hour. Everything fresh. When the chicken is done we’ll shred it.”

“What are you doing now?”

“It’s not what I’m doing. What are you doing?”

## NONNA IS ALWAYS RIGHT ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

"Oh, yeah. I'm almost done rolling the tiny meatballs."

"It's all on the meatballs, I'll heat up the oil and get to browning."

Motioning to me to bring the meatballs I had made with my tiny hands over to her.

She dropped some tallow in a cast iron pan and turned on the burner. Then went back to the big loving soup pot.

"It's gonna boil for a little bit, I'm gonna put half a cup of pastina after we brown the meatballs. Don't forget"

Like a circus juggler all the movements in harmony.

"When is it going to be ready? "

"When it's ready to eat, okay."

"Okay."

Like a song.

"Wait, wait, wait."

"For what?"

"For when everything comes together. When that happens, you have a beautiful wedding soup."

"Smells so good."

"It is coming together."

While this soup isn't used in Italian weddings, I did serve it at my own wedding rehearsal dinner. It felt right to make a big pot of this soup when both sides of our families joined together with guests and friends, many of who met for the first time, What better way to sit together and share a lovely bowl of soup to learn about each other over a meal to become extended family.

"It's, you know, comes from here."

And Nonna would point to her heart.

My favorite thing about Italian wedding soup night would be making the tiny meatballs with bread crumbs, oregano, fresh parsley, you gotta use pork. Those moments in the warmth of the kitchen helping throw ingredients into the pot, working a multi-part process, made all the more flavorful by us working together adding to the boiling water alchemizing into a loving, hearty soup.

Everything made in love returns us home.

Nonna would say,

"Find out who you are and try not to be afraid of it."

We took it to mean, the soup is unique to the person who makes it. Share what you love.

When we find ourselves chopping, making, stirring a pot of soup, we are given an opportunity to open our hearts, the stir is the spell, the prayer for us and those we serve.

We create time to listen in the boil, the stirring, our toil out of our troubles. Soup stimulate our imaginations for what is possible.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Create love and gratitude for what you have.

Create recipes for your life.

Create joy for your hearts.

Create connection with all that is, and the earth's bounty.

Create power to know who you are and why you are here.

Give back your love, give back your heart, give back the gifts you've been given.

Nonna's wisdom came in small, quiet moments, over the course of her care and work cooking meals, to gather, to envision, to provide the necessary space for all of us to enjoy each others company, to hear all the happenings, to share in what we learned, to ask for what we needed and to understand the well of grace available in coming together around soup. The table set for a way to provide for all, extra seats, a tiny extra table, in wellness and love. And, to laugh, to laugh, about the absurdities of a world so abundant fruits literally grow on trees.

The laughter, the clinking spoons, the conversations took me years to reconnect to, but reconnect I did in community. With each pot of soup and pouring in of stock and water boiling and adding and tasting and loving the process and keeping the traditions alive, my heart grew in purpose and energy for community, for ease and resting in the knowledge the world revolves and the sun rises and sets and darkness falls for the light to come again. For we are family. In all light and dark. All of us here and now for eternity.

*Wait. Wait. Wait.*

Like a chant for stillness.

*Wait. Wait. Wait.*

You could hear Nonna whispering,

*Stillness. Peace. Power.*

Echoes through me when I wait for water to boil.

Opposites attract. The leafy vegetable and the meatballs finding harmony in a wedding soup.

There isn't a more satisfying feeling than turning a few ingredients and some spices into something delicious to share.

Nonna was always right and her Italian Wedding Soup was a punctuation on her power to make us feel held and whole. Know. We stand together as one, across the veil, beyond time and space. Making delicious dishes together starting from ingredients from the farms, now grown into networks of regenerative farms, opening up to wisdom, growing from this bottom up decision making, adding in whatever we have to bring life the most eclectic, quirky, use whatever you have recipes, to make a big pot of soup with garlic and love.

My grandmother and my Nonna taught us how to make tiny meatballs, regular meatballs and giant meatballs, cause my big cousin couldn't get enough of dem meatballs, each had its own rhythm and cooking technique. Each brought delight. Once you get into

## NONNA IS ALWAYS RIGHT ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

your meatball rhythm, you'll never go hungry again. We encourage you to explore vegetarian meatball options, as well. This is the magic of working with the hands to cook, which is a sensual turn on, allowing your hands to connect to your heart. For the hands are the tools of the heart.

Our hands build, chop, hammer, embrace our children, tenderly support our labors, feed the sick, bring folks back from the dead, this handmade work of meatball lore is a reminder your hands are made to do great things. One of our favorites as kids was when in the middle of winter, we'd hear the cry out for this Italian Wedding meatball soup. No bigger pleasure, than being called up to the big kitchen leagues to teach the younger ones how to make tiny meatballs, ensuring the traditions continue, the wisdom was shared. New helpers being taught, apprenticeships in the kitchen of life getting down to the business of making perfectly sized tiny, medium or giant meatballs, as was requested. What a fam. To teach is to demonstrate and there was lots of process and patience ending in pure soup delight.

For Sicilians, there's a certain responsibility coursing through our us to do our ancestors proud. To honor the continuing light that pours through the food we serve.

When Nonna made this we knew laughter would flow, joy would permeate the household and love was going to be on the menu. This soup honors traditions, marrying differences of opinion coming together with so much love. It is a beautiful starter for grand adventures of lived experiences. It reminds, love is always the first ingredient.

Our Nonnas, our Grandmothers, our Great Grandmothers, the Grand Nonnas taught us how to make anything better with a tiny nub of garlic and lots of love. Thank you . Thank you for everything.

### ***NONNA IS ALWAYS RIGHT ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP***

This is the perfect combination of rich flavors, the way Nonna liked to make them. A crowded bowl of tiny delicious loving meatballs, fresh vegetables, and savory broth with bits of pasta, culminating in soup, both nutritious and tantalizingly delicious. Perfect for family dinners, potlucks, or any time you're in the mood for a comforting, home-cooked meal. Tiny delicious loving meatballs go a long way to opening the heart with charm and tiny class. When done right they give an authentic taste of Sicily in every bite, showcasing how easy soup making can be when care, patience and work flow.

### ***FLAVOR ENERGETICS***

Seasoned harmony  
Foundational wellness

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Soul soothing connection

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Fresh Parsley (joy + spicy power)

Parmesan (nutty soul + smooth grooves )

Sweet sausage and Ground Meats (wealth + prosperity)

Escarole (toughness + flexibility only a leafy green can bring)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6 ABOUT 12 CUPS)**

#### *Tiny Loving Delicious Meatballs*

8 oz lean ground beef

8 oz ground pork

1/2 cup fresh white bread crumbs (fresh bread not dried)

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley

1 1/2 tsp minced fresh oregano (or 3/4 tsp dried)

1/2 cup finely shredded fresh Parmigiano Reggiano

Minced garlic to your liking

1 large egg

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

1 tbsp olive oil

#### *For the Soup*

1 tbsp olive oil

1 1/4 cups chopped carrots

1 1/4 cups chopped yellow onion

1/4 cup chopped red onions

3/4 cup chopped celery

4 cloves garlic, minced (1 1/2 tbsp)

5 cups (14.5 oz) chicken broth

1 cup dry acini di pepe or orzo pasta (pastina)

6 oz fresh Escarole in season, can substitute baby spinach, roughly chopped

Finely shredded parmesan reggiano , for serving

## ***INSTRUCTIONS***

### ***Tiny Loving Delicious Meatballs***

1. Mix the meat with your hands. Put with a little amount of cheese, a little salt. Gotta use the hands. A little bit of bread crumb. You'll be tempted to make big meatballs, but pure love can be tiny, or whatever size works for you.
2. Add in bread crumbs, parsley, oregano, parmesan, egg, 1 tsp salt and 1/4 tsp pepper. Stick with the combination of the two meats for authentic flavor.
3. Gently toss and break up mixture with hands to evenly coat and distribute. Shape mixture into very small "tiny" meatballs, about 3/4 inch to 1 inch and transfer to a large plate. I like to use gloves, Nonna always used her hands. "When they are tiny, they're easier to eat in soup plus you'll get them more evenly dispersed throughout, a tiny loving meatballs in every spoonful."
4. Don't forget to use your fresh herbs throughout.
5. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Sear meatballs in batches. Add half of the meatballs and cook until browned, turning occasionally (to brown on 2 or 3 sides), about 4 minutes total.
6. Transfer meatballs to a plate lined with paper towels while leaving oil in skillet.
7. Repeat process with remaining meatballs (note that meatballs won't be cooked through at this point, they'll continue to cook completely in the soup). Searing the meatballs is a game changer. And, it is a lot of crazy chaotic fun.

### ***Soup Prep***

1. While meatballs are browning, heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add carrots, onions and celery and sauté until vegetables have softened about 6 - 8 minutes, add garlic and sauté 1 minute longer.
2. Pour in the homemade chicken broth, season with salt and pepper to taste and as you bring mixture to a boil. Add in pasta and the meatballs, reduce heat to medium-low.
3. Cover and simmer, stirring occasionally until pasta is tender and meatballs are cooked through, about 10 minutes, while adding in escarole or spinach during the last minute of cooking.
4. Serve warm, sprinkle each serving with parmesan cheese. 'The more the merrier,' as my nephew likes to say.
5. Fill the bowls to the very top, bubbling with whimsy, drop in some parsley, for cozy authentic flavor and welcoming freshness.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

If you like a more brothy soup you can reduce pasta to 3/4 cup.

Add a parmesan rind to the pot during simmer time for added flavor.

Add fresh basil for more herby flavor.

Don't be skimpy with the garlic. It doesn't just keep the vampires and ghouls away, it allows for joint health, antioxidant power, and calls in pure potential.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Hearty hot rustic bread slathered in butter
- Watch an Italian classic, Moonstruck, The Godfather or Cinema Paradiso with a nice Chianti

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

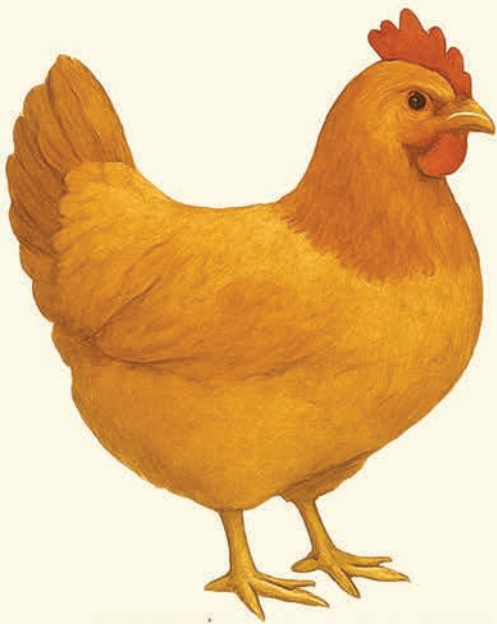
*"Se Non È Zuppa È Pan Bagnato," if it's not soup, it is wet bread.* Even though something is presented in two different ways, it remains the same. Folks would make soup "zuppa" with pieces of bread soaked in water "pan bagnato." Italian word for soup "zuppa" comes from "suppa," which meant "soaked piece of bread." May all the knowledge you gain through this collection of stories and recipes grow for the greatest good for you and all you serve.



As a New Year's Eve baby my brother got the shaft as far as gifts and NYE celebrations post Christmas. He took what could have been a bummer, and turned it into a holiday tradition. With his sister-in-law as his *sous* chef his fam hosts an annual giant meatball pasta dinner. It's a mind blowing, stomach pumping addition to the holiday season. Every year he outdoes the year before. In size and deliciousness. If you are feeling the need for big soup energy, use your skills and imagination and give it try. Make one big, glorious GIANT meatball. Just one. Surround with dry soup aka pasta sauce and report back. As a family, we love meatballs, big and small. Allow whatever feels just right for you, to be your North Star.

# SICILIAN'S HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP

♥ *What you love leads you home.*



## Flavor Energetics

Earth element for long life and healing. Fresh joy and comfort

## Key Ingredients

- Garlic cloves
- Salt and black pepper
- Olive oil
- Carrots, onion, celery
- Tomato puree
- Rosemary

## Ingredients (Serves-4)

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 celery nbs, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 cups chicken broth,
- 1 cup canned crushed tomatoes in thick puree
- 1/3 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 cup small pasta shells
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- Grated Parmesan, for serving

## Instructions

1. In a large pot heat olive oil over medium. Add carrots, onion, celery, cook for 5 minutes, until softened. Add remaining garlic, stir for a few minutes.
2. Add broth, oregano, and salt. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for flavor build, partially covering, for 10 minutes. Add parsley, pepper, and pasta. Simmer again, another 5 minutes.
4. Add shredded chicken from your whole chicken boil down.
5. Pasta is fully cooked in 5-7 minutes
6. Serve hot, sprinkle with more Parmesan.



## CHAPTER 3

# SICILIANS HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP

“YOU GOTTA TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.”

“What kind of business, Pap?”

Sicilian ancestry has powerful roots. We tough. Like their family idol Frank Sinatra, who Pap’s kids would grow to emulate, his parents were from a region where the Mafia originated and thrived. My grandfather glowed with hints and blushes of a mafioso lifestyle, a black Lincoln town car for driving, red pickup truck for work and farm hauling, dressed for whatever the occasion. He worked for one of the local Dons what we referred to as ‘gardening.’ He would drive the ‘Boss’ around for ‘Boss’ activities. Perhaps as he made ‘the rounds’ taking care of business he even did a collection of two. We all endearingly called him ‘Pap’— 5’2” of big stature, whose oddly comedic, contagious joy radiated from his hard work ethics. He was the definition of majestic short stuff. A seen it all, served and survived World War II veteran. He wasn’t diminished by the war, he was grateful for what he had and the ways he could be of service. He met and fell in love with my grandmother, Thelma. He was a life long member of the volunteer fire department. He had a smile as big as the Atlantic Ocean, which was made ever more poignant and funnier because he liked to take his teeth out, as a pre dinner joke.

Pap would take me on his ‘drop-bys’ where he’d check in on various local businesses. And, there were always businesses to which we’d need to ‘drop by’. Whether the pizza place, the mechanics garage, the fish guy, a sewing and lamp repair shop, the sanitation crew office. Construction sites. The Hazelton Pump office.

There are many memories of being left to work a ‘job’ while he would meet with one ‘crew’ or another. At the local gas station, it would be, pumping gas for folks cars while Pap was inside the garage discussing ‘things’ with one guy or another, and often groups of guys.

SICILIANS HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP

He'd tell me.

"Don't give any change."

"What do I do if the tank is full and it is an odd number like 4 dollars and 45 cents?"

"Spill a little gas on the ground, and charge them 5 dollars."

"Ok. You got it."

Up to the task.

"Pap?"

Turning back.

"Why don't we give change?"

"Change is for amateurs, nobody got time for change. Keep it simple."

"Ok!"

"Remember, no change."

As if I'd forget.

He'd come out an hour or so later, slip me a five and we'd be off to the next stop.

His black Lincoln town car rolled through town pulling up in front of a green, white and red flagged Senape's Tavern.

"Gotta check in, will pick up some pitza. Don't leave the car. No matter what."

I'd wait, window rolled down and watch the town's world walk by the storefront of the Tavern. Pretty chill going. Time to daydream.

Pap would come out with a rectangular box of pitza.

Yes. "Pitza."

Immigrants get the job done, Saverio Senape, made up a sfincione, a Sicilian "square" pizza served in a rectangular box. A landmark in Hazleton we'd heat the squares up and have for lunch throughout the week. Sooooo goooood. After soup, pizza is my delightful number two.

With the box of pizza securely in the trunk, we'd hit a few more spots and ultimately end up at home for dinner. My favorite stop was the local butcher place, where we'd pick up 'the meats' wrapped in butcher paper and tied with twine for my Grandmother, my Nonna, Thelma.

Pap let me carry them into the house. We'd hit the door and the immediate call response, on point.

"Do you have the meats?"

"YES, we got the meats!"

Dropping the butcher paper wrapped meat packages on the kitchen counter and run over to where my Dad, James Jr., was talking to the Uncles and cousins, trash talking and taking bets on the Dallas Cowboys v. Eagles football game playing on the telly. Half the family liked the Cowboys, the other, the Eagles. A family rivalry that continues today.

Behind me, Pap would say to his wife, taking off his tweed coat, his brown coppola

hat and hanging them on the coat rack with a wild eyed, smile as big as the Poconos looking at his fam fam.

“I love these gibrones!”

And everyone would laugh.

“Glad you’re back, hon.”

It was so satisfying to enjoy freshly prepared soups after a dreamy day ‘working’ with Pap, ‘checking in’ on the various business places around town and watching a good football game.

While we didn’t have everything we had so much.

My great grandfather, Tony and Maria’s BIG family had a wide stretch of characters, with many interests, whether cops or trouble makers, farmers or ranchers, artists or entrepreneurs. When he passed over the rainbow bridge he was survived by 83 Loving Lutzes.

Sicilians knew how to work hard. Farm, eat, celebrate and care for the land. There were chickens and horses and relationships with community and of course, the family. Family was important, also the ‘Family’ mythologized as benevolent mobsters who got a taste, a kickback, protection money, in an interlocking hierarchy stretching from the homelands across the sea to the Pocono mountains of North Easter Pennsylvania.

Of late, and kinda always, there’s been interest in the ‘mob aesthetic’ as a point of fashion culture. For us it is a fierce sense of family first, accepting multiple personalities with no judgement. Everyone found ways to build community, marry and grow into a flourishing connected extension of the Isle of Sicily. Fresh ingredients, using everything we were given, inviting neighbors, family and friends to share an unbroken flow of giving back to source in right relationship was the Sicilian way.

Growing up, yes, there were memories of the family farm, our gathering spot for reunions, annual events, holidays. The farm was a place where we would feast, where the horses were kept, the chickens, there was even a pool, the outhouse and where family reunions became mid august gatherings of joy. The promise of a new world lead us to the heart of the Poconos with its rich farmlands and gentle breezes, lush fertile ground where we would laugh and play and do the necessary work. It’s where we learned how to chase and catch chickens for the evening meal, pick ginormous blackberries and to run free, get stung by bees, and the mucking of the horse stalls into manure buckets on wheelbarrows dropped into the compost to return to the earth as fertilizer. I refused to catch and kill the quirky, bonkers, chickens. It was something we left to my Grandfather, Pap, which he did in his own completely unique way offering respect and honor for the cycles of life.

Winter put us off the farm and into the house my grandparents shared on Walnut street in Freeland, built on Broad Mountain, nearly 2000 ft. above sea-level, where natural resources, rare earth and coal was mined.

In this two story house were two connected rooms for us to eat and gather, a formal dining room table and an informal large round table allowing immediate family and

## SICILIANS HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP

extended family a seat at the table. The small kitchen, where you would find me, watching the constant movements, of busy hands. Where we learned to be at peace with cooking. From cookies to braciolo, meatballs to lasagna, stock to soup. Traditions flowed, the deep camaraderie of laughter, speaking Italian, trash talking and playing games, reunited, free to be themselves, in these quiet spaces, here and there, I'd watch distant cousins with broken English who'd arrived in Pennsylvania, heal from loneliness over Sunday gatherings. Abundance flowed offerings, favorite recipes, tips and tricks to heal what ailed us and lots of love, rooted in Sicilian pride.

We would watch and listen in wonder as the thrill of animated Italian flowed, curious and excited by the beauty of the language.

"What does 'gioja' mean?"

Met with a smile. It was either a form of cursing, or a tender word of praise for our abundance in being together. The knife cut both ways.

"Joy.

Pure joy."

Every culture has a signature soup, or several. Winter is a gateway for the apex soups, the penicillin of soups, the remedy for the ills and chills of cold and flu season. Sicilians Heal With Love Chicken Soup. We would crave this perfect soup, an old recipe here or there, a way through the joy, loss and grief. The chicken is our partner in soup, stock, eggs and life. Everyone in the family learns to make it, or is involved in one way or another in the brew. It is all you need to know. The absolute best and simplest of the healing ancestral arsenal. Pure perfection. My Nonna, my Grandmother saying,

"You will need chicken, onion, garlic, celery, carrots, bay leaves from the bay laurel tree, fresh oregano, salt and pepper."

"What if we don't have those ingredients, Gran?"

"You never have to worry. The recipe is a guidepost, as you grow, you'll have your own flow."

"Do you think so?"

"I know so."

Then her hand wiped the hair out of my eyes.

"Keep experimenting, keep cooking, you'll learn. My Grandmother taught me how to make it, she learned it from her husband, who learned it from his mother. Each of us brings ourselves to the dish, it holds our intention to love and heal our family, yours may be different than mine."

"Why?"

"We have different experiences, things that bring us joy. Things that heal us, things our body needs. We learn the basics, then you add into it your love, what you have available, and, don't forget a little salt for grace, and pepper for spice, feel your way through. Let those who eat at your table feel your love rise from the soup. Let that be the healing."

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

“What if I can’t cook?”

“Everyone can cook.”

And with that we learned to make Sicilian’s Heal with Love chicken soup. It was a rite of passage. While it was brewing we’d watch movies, a favorite, Moonstruck stayed with us, and even now after we have a delicious family meal someone would shout out, “Bring me the big knife. BRING ME, THE BIG KNIFE. So I can slit my throat.” Every time we make this loving, laugh filled family soup it returns me to my gioja. My joy.

### **SICILIANS HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP**

What you love leads you home. This is the soup you know down deep in your bones, is a healer. A bowl delivered when you are under the weather to bring comfort and healing on a deep level. If you are concerned about a loved one’s health, this is a clear and present meal you can make and serve, or send or drop off to support someone when they are ill and need the reminder of their power, foundational health and wellness.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Earth elements for long life and healing  
Fresh joy and all the nice comforting spice

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

- Garlic cloves (deep complexity + healing)
- Salt and black pepper to taste (earth + amplify)
- Olive oil for sautéing vegetables (vitality + antioxidants)
- Carrots, onion, celery (texture + flavor + joy)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 celery ribs, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 6 cups chicken broth (low-sodium or homemade)
- 1 cup canned crushed tomatoes in thick puree
- ½ tsp dried rosemary

## SICILIANS HEAL WITH LOVE CHICKEN SOUP

- 1 cup small pasta shells (optional can use a red potato)
- 2 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- 1 tbsp chopped parsley
- Grated Parmesan, to serve

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a large pot heat olive oil over medium. Add carrots, onion, celery, cook for 5 minutes, until softened. Add remaining garlic, stir for a few minutes.
2. Add broth, oregano, and salt. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer for flavor build, partially covering, for 10 minutes. Add parsley, pepper, and pasta. Simmer again, another 5 minutes.
4. Add shredded chicken from your whole chicken boil down.
5. Pasta is fully cooked in 5-7 minutes
6. Serve hot, sprinkle with more Parmesan.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- A cold winter night and your chosen family resting comfortably after a wonderful meal.
- A good Nero d'Avolar wine (or a lovely seltzer with lemon, if that's your vibe)
- Put that Sicilian Tarantella vinyl on the record player and light a candle for the divine mother Mary.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

*"La vostra minestra sia sempri cauda," May your soup always be hot. May your hands always radiate the warmth of your joy, and your family be loud enough to crowd you with so much care and support to chase away any and all worries.*

Some people say it's the ingredients.

Others say it's the technique. Sicilians?!

We know, it's the care. The temperature. The love.

We believe in soup.

Rustic, refined, and full of love — just like you.

I love my family, my extended familia, my beloved community, and the world at large.

To be Sicilian is to know the sea, to love the earth, the sweet breezes in the trees, to understand the worlds we inhabit in sustainable, symbiotic relationship with our ethos.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

As Italian Americans we were taught to appreciate the gifts we've been given and to always use it all.

If we have more, we share.

If we need something, we ask for what we need. If the community needs something we throw a celebration to gather and ask for G-d to deliver for our neighborhoods.

Nothing goes to waste.

From lemons to chicken parts, to leftovers, to churning homemade butter to exercise and remember the world provides.

You name it, there were beautiful uses for everything. Every pot of this penicillin of the soup pot, we honor garlic, chicken stock, oregano, ginger, garden stock to heal everything.

In meandering through the stories and recipes for a life well lived, honoring ancestral connections and building community, we hope you feel like your best 'Uncles,' and 'Aunties' like Don, Johnny Pastrami, Rocco, Anthony Jr., Janet, Judy, Rose, or as Grandma used to yell, 'Vincent Bag of Bones' —we need your presence at the table.'

All of it becomes part of your hype and foundational wellness team. The whispers, the laughs, the intuition, the yells, the ghosts, the memories, the experiences all come together as we build out soups.

What you need will show up as is necessary, exactly what you need. Don't forget to use all of it, as you wish.

And don't forget.

Everything changes.

But.

We don't give change.

# The Sun is Shining All Over the Place Tomato Soup

## INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp ( $\frac{1}{2}$  stick) unsalted butter  
2 tbsp olive oil  
2 Large shallots, thinly sliced  
2 tbsp + 1 tsp kosher salt  
5 Large delicious tomatoes cut into pieces  
(beefsteak, grape, cherry)  
16 Cherry tomatoes, halved  
3 Cloves garlic and 2 tbsp of tomato paste  
Basil, rosemary, oregano, and thyme  
Sea salt and black pepper

## GARNISHES

Halved cherry tomatoes  
Basil and borage flowers  
Coriander flowers  
Lemon thyme flower clusters

## MAKE THE SOUP

1. Melt butter in a 4-quart pot add olive oil over medium-low heat, caramelize shallots w/ 1 tsp of salt
2. Add tomatoes (seeded) with addt'l salt
3. Blend contents and cook, uncovered.
4. Stir until tomatoes have broken down
5. Add chicken stock, stir in a continual spiral until the blend is perfection
6. Add tomato paste, stir till robust
7. Enhance your soup at your pace as you taste, taste, taste

## SERVING

1. Divide the halved cherry tomatoes among 4 bowls arranging them playfully on one side with flowers artistically placed
2. Pour hot soup on the other side to balance this tomato universe
3. Arrange parsley or cilantro at its loving center
4. Serve and devour with crispy anchovy toast





## CHAPTER 4 THE SUN IS SHINING ALL OVER THE PLACE TOMATO SOUP

“STUGOTZ.”

Would pierce through the chirping birds on the farm. The laughter of the family gathering, as one or other of my Uncles would yell in reference to something one cousin, or another, was doing. I loved it.

While they used it to express frustration, or irritation at one behavior or another. For the longest time, it’s all I would call my brother, much to his annoyance.

“Stugotz. Bro. You a stugotz”

It never failed to make me laugh.

“Stuuuuugggooooottttttzzzz.”

My Bro was told to take care of his little sister.

“Never talk back, or hit her.” One day I went too far.

“You a Stugotz. Bro.”

It was a no go. My Bro went into the red zone. He taught me a lesson in respecting your Big Bro. Stugotz no more.

He taught me what a ‘pummelling’ meant.

Drying a few of my tears, I attempted to share with my Mom, “I don’t know why he beat me, I was only calling him a ‘stugotz.’”

“It’s like a term of endearment.”

My Mom shook her head.

“It isn’t. You knew better. And, you decided to push it.”

“Ummm. Me. Nooo.”

“Give annoying your Bro a break. Help me harvest these tomatoes. Grab that Basket.”

This kid, who wanted to be like her Big Bro, turned toward my Mother, her wisdom



and joy, to learn from her, and fell in love with the care and work of the garden. The smells, taste, and medicine of working with the land.

The years of helping in the garden taught me how prolific tomato plants are. We had fun harvesting tomatoes and how they needed to be eaten or processed almost immediately coming off the vine. She taught us not to put the pulled vines in the compost heap cause they create chaos. My Mom shared the art of summer canning of the tomato harvest to take us through the harsh, bitter, icy, frozen winters. Every tomato was used, eaten or turned into something. With all the tomatoes, and then more tomatoes, upon more tomatoes, grown in the hot muggy summers of our eastern Pennsylvania farmland roots. I fell in love.

Tomatoes, unprocessed, unapologetic, endless, ever present in a sense of familia, beyond any bond. Used in every form, the reason in every season. Add to this to the strong pull of oregano, the scent and sense of this powerful duo would bring me to heaven on earth. We'd breakdown the tomatoes in spurts when they were harvest ready through the end of summer. Each harvest had a process, boiling off skins, removing core and seeds with a tomato grinder, preparing jars for canning would keep us stacked through winter.

Once we handled our tomato canning, the mood would turn to tomato roasting. No greater pleasure than the slow go of the sweet roasting of the varied heirlooms, reds and yellows, with our dearest buds garlic flowing into the perfect meal— my Mom coined *The Sun is Shining All Over the Place Tomato Soup*, the necessary heart warming, sunshine sharing, making sure the family is fed, well. The Italian way direct from the garden in a red symphony of community at play with the fam-i-lay.

When my Great Uncle Bud informed me tomatoes were a fruit not indigenous to Italy the shock was palpable. *What??!!!*

"How is that possible, Uncs?"

"Tomatoes, potatoes, and corn are from the 'New' World, here, Americas. Spaniards brought them to Italy around the 16th century. We returned the favor by loving tomatoes so hard we turned it into magic sauces for many uses depending on spices and herbs used.

Not everything we love is born Italian, but everything we love becomes Italian."

"I love them."

Picking tomatoes on his farm wasn't supposed to be for query and jawing but my Great Uncle Bud was chatty.

"The Italian climates warm, luscious sun, sea breezes, were a perfect meeting point. Inspiring delicious celebrations of the fruit's flavor, nutritional value and abundance."

Here's where the world at large, the senses of touch, taste, sight converged with my curiosity.

"It's a fruit?"

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

“Yes. Botanically, tomatoes are fruits.”

“Why don’t we make tomato spirits like I’ve seen Nonna make with the lemons?”

“You could make tomato wine when you are older, if it is something that still interests you. For now let’s turn these sun kissed tomatoes into a lovely zuppe.”

One thing I learned that summer, Sicilians don’t need alcohol, they get drunk on sauce and sun.

“We’re going to roast, we’re going to simmer, we’re going to juice our dearest tomato friends, make a passata, a purée.”

As kids you don’t understand the lifetimes of lived experiences of those who keep an eye on you, who help you grow up, whose ways and knowledge lend to who you will become in the reflection of these everyday miracles of connection with our earth’s magic and miracles. These beautiful folks who watched after you, babysat, taught, spent time with, fed you, laughed with you, perhaps scarred you, disciplined you and shared with you what they loved so deeply as to surround you in a thousand details of their wisdom.

My Dad moved us away from the family to break out on his own. But not to far. We settled in the Lehigh Valley, an hour south from where he grew up in the Pocono mountains when he took his ‘corporate’ job as a salesman with Procter & Gamble. Not far in miles but a brave new world outside of our town full of relatives, streams, lakes and mountains.

During end of summer tomato season harvests, my parents would host the family for Sunday supper in our backyard. The families would appear in dark Lincoln town cars. Picnic tables and lawn chair friendly, with benches and screeching children in shorts, some type of water slide or sprinkler system and the bounty of harvest, fresh herbs, garden zucchinis, tomatoes, peppers and anything else grown in the massive dirt garden in the corner of the yard. Our house was surrounded by large farms, and we were a block from the dairy farm across spring creek road that ran along the creek. My childhood was never more than two hundred feet from cows, chickens, endless stretches of corn fields and a neighborhood full of local produce, homemade pies for sale on the side of the road, and deep respect and passion for tending our earth.

After running around like crazy children, we’d settle into the tables with wild abandon and eat everything put in front of us. My favorite was dunking bread from one of the Italian bakeries my Grandfather knew into that fresh made roasted tomato soup and crunching through the magic of tomato and butter dripping down my cheeks.

It was as delicious a soup as the sun shining on a beautiful day with the earth under your feet dreaming into a big blue sky, knowing Mother Earth offers smiles of inner summer sunshine, full of joy. We feasted on being together.

## **THE SUN IS SHINING ALL OVER THE PLACE TOMATO SOUP**

*A love letter to summer's juiciest tomatoes and everything blooming in the garden. Channeling warmth, beauty, and the untamed joy of farm to table love. You'll experience the heat of summer in any season you make this, with its laughter as a hug in a bowl from someone who *really* sees you. The real you.*

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Bright, rooted, floral, buttery, and sun-drunk

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Tomatoes (joy + speaking your truth with sweetness)  
Onion (grounding + depth + base of brightness)  
Garlic (protection + passion + roast what doesn't serve)  
Broth (vegetable or chicken) (flow + nourishment)  
Unsalted Butter (softness + grace)  
Olive oil (absolutely needed. Don't ask questions)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

#### *For the Soup*

- 2 tbsp (½ stick) unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp + 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 5 large tomatoes, cut into pieces, Deep Reds, Sun Sugar (other tomatoes to use, beefsteak, grape, cherry)
- 16 cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3 cloves Garlic
- 2 Carrots (or red peppers), hard chopped
- Basil, rosemary, oregano, and thyme, for the good thymes
- Sea Salt and Black Pepper (enhance your soup at your pace - taste, taste, taste)
- 1⅓ cups full-fat coconut milk or heavy cream plus more for drizzling (optional)

### *Garnishes*

- Halved cherry tomatoes
- Basil flowers/leaves and Borage flowers
- Coriander flowers and Chive blossoms
- Lemon thyme flower clusters
- Fennel sprigs
- Fennel bulb, thinly sliced

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Spend time with your herbs, clean them up and allow them to socialize and communicate with you, remove leaves chewed on in the garden. Pre chop your shallots, carrots and chives.
2. Make a decision. Are you feeling roasty or saute friendly? No wrong answers.
3. Get down to sauté. In a 4 quart pot over medium-low heat, melt butter. Add shallots and 1 tsp of the sea salt. Stir occasionally and sweat until translucent—about 10 minutes. Don't rush. I repeat. *Do. Not. Rush.* Let the smells coalesce, sweet, welcoming, luscious. Get in your groove, do a little dance. Breathe deeply.
4. Roast to blend to serve. Get vege into a roasting pan. Add all the sun loved tomatoes and the remaining 2 tablespoons of salt. Stir like you're waking the soup up into its most loving form. Roasting guide: 400°F for 20-30 minutes for whole or halved tomatoes, 450°F for 25-30 minutes for sliced tomatoes until they soften and begin to caramelize. Slower roasts for more intense flavor, use a lower temperature, 350-375°F for about 45-60 minutes, or go as low as 250°F for a few hours. You have options. Experiment.
5. If you are sautéing get it moving. Raise the heat to medium and cook uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the tomatoes release enough juice to be swimming in their own sunlight, juicy, tender, gentle grace.
6. Transfer the contents in batches to a blender and puree until smooth. Pass the blended soup through a fine sieve into a bowl to catch any seeds or skins.
7. Use immediately or chill and store in the fridge. When ready to serve, reheat gently over low heat—this soup doesn't like to be rushed or boiled.
8. Serve by dividing halved cherry tomatoes among 4 bowls, arranging them playfully on one side or as you wish.
9. Tuck flowers and herbs between the halves. Stack, cluster, let the colors dance. Allow yourself to play.



## THE SUN IS SHINING ALL OVER THE PLACE TOMATO SOUP

10. At the table, pour the hot soup into the opposite side of the bowl so it flows toward the garnish like sunlight bathing the garden in the afternoon.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

The redder, the sweeter the tomatoes. With the heirlooms, the darker the color the richer the taste. Use the roughest tomatoes, use all the tomatoes you can. Yellow love, green love, deep red, small, large, sun kissed, sun burnt, don't discriminate.

Substitute fresh herb leaves or chopped fennel tops if flowers aren't available. This soup thrives with what is most alive, feel free to improve upon this with herbs that speak to you.

We like the heat so we slip crushed red pepper, (what I like to call an Italian's best pepper friend) in, you may or may not want heat in your pot. Use your discretion. See what the pot calls for.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Grilled sourdough with herbed butter made from leftover herbs with a crisp white wine or sparkling lavender lemonade
- A sun hat, a good book and nowhere to be

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"A tavola non si invecchia." *Literally translates as you don't get old at the table.* With good company and good food, time doesn't pass. A good bowl of soup makes the world go around.

"Stugotz" is a popular Italian-American slang term derived from the Neapolitan phrase "stu cazz" which literally translates to "this d\*k," used dismissively, similar to saying "this is bullsh\*t." This soup is anything but BS. Grow and harvest your own tomato 'lovelies.' You can even take them off the vine when green as they keep on growing after being picked. You've worked hard to grow tomatoes, enjoy them, use them, process them, jar them, soup them. Find ways to savor your own tomato sauces. You can feel their sizzling power coursing through your veins, alive. The more color, born of the hot sun, deep oranges and beyond make the soup life richer, more loving, more powerful, taste the sweet sun, the very soul of the garden in your brew and watch the world thrive with new eyes.



## CHAPTER 5

# TAKING STOCK IN WHAT WE ARE, AND WHAT WE ARE NOT

“TUTTO FA BRODO.”

“Everything makes broth.”

My great grandmother’s declaration to stop lollygagging and get down to business.

“Go out in the garage and grab a hunk of stock from the freezer?”

“Granny. We outta the frozen stock.”

“What are youse even doing with your life? Knuckle in. We about to make some stock.”

We learned early soup stock is essential to our very existence in the kitchen. No stock and it was Dante’s inferno. All hell broke loose. It was needed in every aspect of our cooking. Strong flavorful broth is the beginning base note of every recipe.

The inspiration for every great soup, comes with taking stock of what we have and what do not have. Taking stock is powerful because it recognizes, what may seem useless can be important. Taking stock allows you to come to the center of your beingness, knowing yourself, your loves and how you tick.

We are Sicilian stock. We grew up with farms, uncles and aunties and cousins. We were taught early and often, family is what you make of it. You put the time in, you bear the fruits of your labor.

Check out what’s in your fridge, your pantry, get to know your neighbors, their fruit trees, do they have a bay laurel tree, if they have a garden, get an exchange program going. Every contribution or effort, no matter how small or large, adds to making stock. Think of it as a way of encouraging people to make the most of the abundance growing all around us, even if it seems insignificant. Every ingredient matters. and grace comes through making of the broth (“*brodo*”). You can use leftovers such as vegetable ends or cheese peels or rinds. Everything makes stock.

## TAKING STOCK IN WHAT WE ARE, AND WHAT WE ARE NOT

One day I found dried red lentils way in the back of my pantry, I thought to myself.

*Wow. I love lentils. Let's make a lentil witches summer solstice surprise soup du Mel and invite some folks over to watch Jennifer Esposito's Fresh Kills.*

It's important to support our Italian sisterhood. Fresh Kills is a gorgeous depiction of the loyal women of an organized crime family in New York City in the late 20th century. Don't miss the magic of independent cinema and soup. But I digress.

I had lentils, but I had no stock. Ugh. Gotta make the stock.

And.

*What else we got, to make a soup?*

These words are the call response of the universe, the room atmosphere shifts in the call, a dense stirring, or what I like to call, the soupening creeps upon up as the lightning electricity of inspiration flows.

I look at the nasturtiums out my window. *Resilient, alive, slightly nutty.*

*Hmmm. Something delightful for seasoning. In the back of the pantry was a pack of dried shiitake mushrooms, purchased at a local Italian Market. While shiitake mushrooms are not native to Sicily they are cultivated there using traditional Asian methods on local chestnut and oak woods. There's a company in Trecastagni at the foot of Mt. Etna, which produces them using these methods.*

*Hmmm.... I could make an umami stock, like a tea with the nasturtiums and hydrate the shiitake in hot water for our Italian Witches Lentil stock.*

*Perfect.*

Fill the electric kettle and let's boil our water.

Setup the jar for making a stock in tea methodology, muddling the nasturtiums, adding a handful of dried shiitakes and then pouring in the boiling water. This method of stock tea is pure bliss. If you don't have shiitake, you can add dried, fresh porcini mushrooms, for at least a good fifteen minutes of a soaking time, turning on the releasing magic available in each herb, earthy mushroom and leaf, changing form from one to another, becoming an extracted flavor with the energetics of the living plants and fungi.

*"Stock emerges from the energies, the elementales."*

My Grandmother would say,

*"This too can become a stock."*

For her, everything, everything was a part of a good stock. From these two ingredients, mushrooms and nasturtiums which will give you warming nutrients which will buoy any lentil flavor. Let your imagination and what's available in your community build your foundational stock making. This was my way, you will have your own.

It is no surprise the lentil soup rocked the house. Delicious. Folks were complimenting the unique flavor flavs, the love that went into the brew. The inspiration of looking out the window magic. We'll share this lentil recipe later in the cookbook. You can rest assured when it's all gone to hell and a hand basket a hearty lentil soup will be there for you.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Never worry bout a thing. Impart flavor. Allow nutrients to flow. Be one with your pot.

Other things ignite as you begin to explore your souper stock love. Your biophilia, your love all living things. It occurred to me, as I was basking in the joy of sharing soup with our neighborhood non-profit. We, as humans, are the waters, as we've discussed many times, more liquid than substance. We were gathering on the garden terrace, home of our gracious, urban ecosystem restoration test garden to write and sing songs with our collaborative group-singing and songwriting experiential group, *Band of Singers*, a non-traditional, interdisciplinary community choir creating original song and story performance led by musical director and folk artist, Maesa Pullman. One of the elders broke off a bunch of mint and oregano from a thriving herb patch, muddled it between his hands and tossed it into the brewing, boiling tea pot to make a herbal tea to share. I had forgotten the easy grace and direct connection of hot water and plant matter to create something soul satisfying. In that moment of returning to the direct connection of the leaves of the mulberry tree, the linden tree and grace of our bay leaf laurel tree dropped into the pot to make a soothing serum for a gentle nights sleep, a heart opening conjure of pure delight. The world became one and all time was now.



### MAKING STOCK

There are many ways to make stock. We like to keep a 'scraps' bag where we put all our scraps, in the freezer, cause it is less messy and when the good ole eclectic bag of scraps is full, we can drop into a boil and make stock with a chicken carcass. That's when we say, *we good*. You gotta be willing to live and love in gratitude for what you have, not pine over what you do not. Soup stock is our connection to our intuition. It is both literal and symbolic: taking stock of your kitchen, your body, and your life and making something beautiful.

Ingredients that become something so much greater and more delicious through the fire of transformation. It is the place of the ultimate beingness through which we survive and thrive with anything we are given. Together we overcome adversity through collaboration. This 'use what you have' philosophy is the essence of everything is soup. What's left behind. What we make with our transformative techniques and what we have to serve and feed each other moving forward.

Many of the best soups of all time began with taking stock of what we have and allowing the ingredients on hand, in season, from the garden, a neighboring farmer dropping off ingredients, an abundance of an item that needs to be used NOW.

This is the spell you cast with your heart. This is why, everything is soup, is the way through for Sicilians.

It is in our relationship to all living things, loving for how it can improve our lives, feed us in lean times, create memories, develop connections, we become what we were meant to be. We share soup, as love, and throughout this book remind you, whatever is in front of you, whatever you have too much of, whatever is too loud, or too bitter or too sweet or however you feel about it, throwing everything into a pot to make soup is a brewing magic and miracles adventure, making something greater than the individual items and allowing the experience, the ingredient to speak to you. This is the way we take stock in what we have.

And.

We let go what we haven't, making the world better for our having honored the deepest truth of our ingredients. Everything, everything, is soup and we hope this practice and process of discovering using what is most alive, what is ready for use, what is calling for creation, what you know your body is craving this is the spell for healing and wholeness bringing you to the center of the pot where you know EVERYTHING REALLY IS soup.

And to make soup, an intimacy with making stock, using what is discarded to enhance the flavor profile and nutrient density of our soups. Layering flavor is loving and loving is healing and it is an important skill in our soup repertoire.

As with any soup, adding what you love, enhances the expression of loving within the alchemical heating process. If you have an inclination to add dill, cause you love dill, when you add a leafy green like a spinach, do indeed dill it up. Anyone who says 'that's not in the recipe' can dill with it. *If you boil a funny bone, it becomes a laughing stock. That's humorous. Do what you do.*

A friend was going through a surgery recently.

I said, "I'll make you a bone broth?"

They were like.

"I'm vegan."

"Oh. Okay. What about a carrot bones soup?"

"Not a fan of carrots."

"Hmmm. Ok. Can do a shitake mushroom deep soul broth stock."

And, with that, we agreed on a healing shiitake love mushroom brodo.

Soup making is about flexibility. It's about love, understanding, and care. It's about listening and we are grateful to be of soup service in stock making.

## THE SOUPENING

When you are working with what you have you gain strength and confidence. Of course, there is the other approach to stock, using good, fresh ingredients, preferably from your garden, or a local community garden. The closer to hand picked, no pesticides, brings greater nourishment, but, it isn't necessary in soup making. Delicious soup comes from everything. High heat is the alchemical power of transformation into something greater than its parts. There is no greater joy of connection than the most wonderful of all combinations. The sum becomes greater than the individual ingredients, the most magical of all collaborations the mighty, deep, loving, delicious bowl of soup.

When you have little in the fridge, some dried beans from winter, a hint of mint, a touch of salt and the world is reborn into a loving soup. What is sad in its loneliness in the fridge, comes alive in a soup pot.

## STOCK BASICS

Vegetable leftovers are the second coming of the lord. They can make a wonderful delicious vegetable stock. Keep your scraps handy, fridge or freezer too, then bust them out for a stocky, seasoned, brew. Now's the time to truly understand the nutrients come from all that we might sometimes ignore, or deem not perfect. Put it in a pot and let your water get super hot, boiling if you will, ready for the fill, to decompose and release, shed all the beauty of their life force into a what is a stock.

It's your time to discover what your body craves, it's your time to grow in flavor like enjoying spicy ginger butts, and a touch of garlic bulb, some truly thrown off peels with a touch of zeal, will bring you to the healthy well understood connection of all the notes of the universe.

Don't be afraid to experiment. Remember everything is soup and see what a boil up with do for you. My one golden rule for me and my body is to always have celery. It is a root veg, it is a watery, crunchy, powerhouse of a savory flavor. If you feel this like you feel your bones after a wonderful sunny hike. Always. Have. Celery. In the fridge.

Remember we are here to co-exist, to be a part of all that is, to grow, and know, there's plenty for all of us. Nature is abundant, we are a part of all that is. And now you know the secrets of our earthy plants and herbs, the fruits of all our labors and the loves of what's



here to grow our hearts, minds and bodies. A stock is what you do, when you don't know what to do with all that's left behind. Bring it back to life in a loving newer form. When we say a depth of field comes from knowing, from wisdom from the slow grace of brewing up a storm. What you put in a stock today can save your life tonight.

## **WANNA HAVE THAT SAVORY RICH VIBE**

Savory richness, comes from adding roasted onion, tomato paste, mushrooms, simmer, simmer, simmer, low and slow brings out the greatest parts of what cooks. One of our secrets is in the mycelium. As you now know, we like to use dried shiitake mushrooms as a base for our stock. It works on every level, grounding you to the soil of your ancestors and in a wee way reminds us of our interconnections with the mycelium network.

Taking stock of what you have in the cupboard, the back of the drawer in the fridge, stretching into the far corner of the lowest shelf. Look in your cabinets, a can of tomatoes, chickpeas, some dried shiitake mushrooms to soak in hot water like a tea for some umami flavor favs. You gotta concentrate on an essential, concentration of flavor. Any scrap from cuttings, carrot tops, celery stubs, stems of fresh oregano, onion roots.

Hold onto growing your ability to make hearty stocks, lean into developing flavors and building nutrients that heal your bod-yay. It is a part of our soup work and beyond. It's the key to developing flavor, the essence of nourishment and the world goes round and round as we honor and pay attention to our ingredients and the way they play. It is the keystone for flavor, for our senses to dance in possibilities. It is the power to align in what is essential. It requires high temps and then a delightful long term simmer to develop an abundance of health and wellness, moving slowly in transformative deliciousness.

Every time I see what's left of a garlic bulb, the straight inner, unused center or a sprouting hub, the inner nub of a beautiful garlic bulb. For a split second as I consider tossing it, not using every single ounce of the garlic. I hear Nonna's voice in my head, "Always, always use it all." And, I add it to my stock making bag.

"Now pluck those feathers off the chicken."

My Grandfather would catch and kill the birds and we'd be cleaning them.

"Put them in the bag."

"The feathers?"

"Yes"

"Damn. This is crazy."

"It's what we do. Honor the bird. Use it all."

Loving wisdom reminders. Waste nothing. We have been given so much. No reason to toss anything. Use everything.

Basic building blocks to sustain you.

*'Always use it all.'*

Use it all. Spend the extra time. As you wish. It all matters. And, in each moment, we know how we do one thing is how we do everything. Take care. Be gentle. Enjoy the process. Feast on your life.

## **BONE BROTH**

Dem Bones, dem bones, dem bones. We are going to highlight the chicken but please know this process works for vegetable stock, oxtail, beef, etc. etc. Listen to your intuitions, listen to your inner guidance, say grace, set a prayer for the simmer, infuse the pot with good energies for optimal health like may this broth, stock, offering total nourishment, aligning the cells in connection and optimal health and cast the spell when you turn on the fire of the stove.

Let's take a look at process, the essence of the art of stock. You gotta do the do to keep yourself fed, well and full of the glimmers of life.

In my early days after moving to Los Angeles looking for my people, I stumbled into my media and entertainment cummari, an Italian Girls Night Out which led to our crew brining the feast of San Genaro to Los Angeles and all that comes with celebration our Italian-ness which gave me the power of another one of my favorite Sicilian wisdom traditions.

*"No stock. No problem."*

If you don't have stock, you now know what to do. Lean into your knowledge as you go for deeper and deeper flavors. We like to use our red dutch oven gifted from a dear family member, so it has memories of past stock and ancestral wonder going for it, knowledge and power from each use. Please note, use any pot big enough to handle dem bones, dem dreams and everything that brings you joy, then let the waters combine with your actions for the perfect cook.

## **KEEP IT SIMPLE**

If you are exhausted, not feeling well. Nourishing food doesn't have to be complicated. When you crave the comfort of a wholesome bowl of homemade vegetable soup but are too tired to fuss, there's a simple truth: *you make do with what you got.*

Keep it simple with a no sauté, almost no-chop soup that delivers medicinal quantities of vegetables without demanding your full energy. You can put the pot on, drop in your veg, hit the fire to boil, go lie down, and let the stove do the work. In our traditions, there's a whole category of vegetable soups made this way: everything goes straight into the pot with water or broth, then simmers gently until the flavors melt into each other.

It sounds too simple to work, but trust me—by the end, every vegetable tastes like it's

been slow-dancing with the others. It's endlessly adaptable: use whatever's in your fridge, pantry, or garden. Potatoes and greens make a soothing green soup, pumpkin turns it golden and sweet, and, whatever you got, every version carries the same quiet magic, restoring your strength one spoonful at a time.

## STOCK UP

Everything is soup is how we take what we have and layer flavor. It is a mirror for working together. Building community. Growing in power and purpose.

I'm in the world here today because of my ancestors, because of long held Italian traditions of the sea. I honor them through these recipes and stories. I celebrate the joy they brought me and I hope they bring you the same. The smaller the barrel of wine, the more rich the depth of flavor. Let the pot be your guide. "Nella botte in piccola, c'è il vino buono (in small barrels, there is good wine)"

Big things come through. Size doesn't matter. It derives from the fact that winemakers usually store their best vintages in small barrels, in order to concentrate the aromas. Concentration is power. It's a bit of the same in soup making. The bigger your pot the longer the cook for the melting of flavor into highest form.

Taking stock time is the core of being authentic, the closer you are to who you are, to the person, to the gifts, to the heart song that you are here to play, the more beautiful the expression and the experience and the connection you bring to the world. An Italian family is one beautiful, dynamic, bold, aggressive, but loving part of the world.

We're like animals unleashed on the wild to find our things, to celebrate what we love, to make lemons out of lemonade to use the rinds of cheese to heal our bodies, to infuse the medicine of leaves into our systems, to really be a listening heart to the world. And in our authenticity, our relationship to all that is, the world is reborn.

Soup is the most authentic expression of the ingredients placed in the pot, the broth becomes the power and purpose of what it means to say *'eat your soup, or we're going to toss you out the window'* the broth the brodo stirs the magic, to connect you more deeply to your heritage, your cultural expressions, to what is most beautiful, most active, most alive, and most loving.

When an Italian says, "Andiamo." It is ON, it's the crack of lightning where all possibilities reside, the present where our ancestors live again, and we love again as our acts merge in the power of soup making. Big beautiful bowls of soup.

Stock can be done on the stove in a pot, my Grandmother called this the witches cauldron brew, turning water into sustenance, spells of protection, safety and long life. There are many other techniques to explore, in knowing stock basics, you can rest and relax into the heart of Sicilian style and substance.

### **TAKING STOCK IN WHAT WE ARE, AND WHAT WE ARE NOT**

Making stock is ritual of regeneration. Take what's been discarded. Bones, peels, stems, scraps and distill what is essential. A carcass from last night's chicken dinner becomes today's medicine. Leftovers become legacy. Waste becomes wealth. Making stock is an act of care. It's slowing down long enough to melt marrow into memory.

Distill what is essential from discarded ingredients, take the carcass of your chicken dinner and melt down them bones and things into a comforting, healing phenomenal chicken stock.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

This is an eight hour stock making day where we "stumble out of bed, rumble to the kitchen, pour ourselves a cup of ambition." and set ourselves up for a whole world of possibilities. Keep in mind Sicilians like to add lemon, red pepper flakes, thyme, oregano, dill, and bay leaves in good measure to our stock. If you learn anything from this book, it's to do YOU. Celebrate who you are and what you love through one of the oldest forms of meal making, soup. Stock is both (nourishment + reflection)

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 whole chicken (love your carcass) meat largely removed • Easy as 1-2-3 bay leaves
- 1 sprig/bunch each of fresh herbs like thyme
- 16 cups (128 ounces) of filtered water
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 2-3 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- About 1 tbsp of salt

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. The first step is to add all the ingredients like the chicken, vegetables, and herbs in a large pot and then cover with filtered water to completely cover the chicken bones, about 8 to 10 cups should suffice, but don't leave your carcass butt out naked or you'll lose the alchemical breakdown of dem bones, as well as a

## TAKING STOCK IN WHAT WE ARE, AND WHAT WE ARE NOT

tablespoon of apple cider vinegar, to help draw more of the good stuff from the bones.

2. Whatever you do, lid on or lid off, ensure the bones are covered in liquid through the process to retain all of the nutrients of the transformation.
3. Must haves for Sicilians: Chicken, filtered water and apple cider vinegar.
4. Give it a salt and pepper for joy and prosperity. Oregano and thyme for all things miraculous. After that you gotta free flow, you can use your scraps, your fresh herbs, your imagination to add what feels connected to your bone broth.
5. Simmer on low for 8 hours.
6. Your broth is technically ready to be used. Note: it contains a high amount of fat, especially with skin. For leaner, put broth in the fridge and leave until it's completely set, usually overnight. Strain it. Get rid of anything that is a chunk or gunk. Once the broth is fully set, fat floats to the surface, forming a thick, creamy layer. It'll be easy for you to remove as much, or as little as you want. This extra step will give pure essential broth joy.
7. Once the chicken bones have melted, the broth has simmered to disintegrated, strain, and store in large glass containers to use in all your favorite dishes. Or get the big stock freeze cube makers and freeze to fight the power on another day. I'm not usually a fan of drinking broth in a mug, but this one? Like a fine wine, I add it to a favorite muggy mug and without a doubt, my toes tingle and my heart grows three sizes with a nice, piping hot cup, diluted, of course, of da soup.

### ***SOUPER TIPS***

- Freeze broth in ice cube trays specific to this task. Then break apart and put in freezer safe bags and keep in the deep freeze to have back up if someone gets sick, aka, be the person with a plan for what may happen in the world. Germs be germinating out there. Keep for immune boost and loving healing.
- When making chicken stock or bone broth, it's recommended to start with the lid on to initially bring the liquid to a simmer, then remove the lid partway through cooking to allow evaporation and concentrate the flavors; essentially, use the lid at the beginning and simmer uncovered towards the end.

*Key points about using a lid for stock*

Covering the pot helps prevent rapid evaporation as the stock heats up extracting flavors from the bones and vegetables.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Removing the lid later:

Once the liquid is simmering, removing the lid allows some water to evaporate, resulting in a more concentrated broth.

*Monitor liquid level*

Regardless of whether the lid is on or off, keep an eye on the liquid level and add more water if necessary to maintain proper coverage of the bones, in Sicilian kitchens this is always called covering the bones.

Remember, soup broth is made with the parts of veggies that we usually throw in the trash. Ends of asparagus, garlic & onion skins, put all these 'scraps' in a pot, add water and cook, then turn off the heat and let it continue infusing while it cools off. Once cooled, blend it all together and strain off the fibrous veggie parts and discard, saving the delicious liquid broth to use as a base for your other creations.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

Winter's Bone, a dog chasing that winter's bone. Never give up. You've taken stock in what is most important, the thing you need to do for your highest self. Pair your stock with warmth of a fuzzy wool blanket after the bitter cold calls you to the fires blazing in the fireplace.

The magic and miracles of the earth presented in a bowl warming your hands as the ultimate expression of love.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Gallina vecchia fa buon brodo," aka *the old hen makes good stock*. It is good to trust experience.

May these insights and offerings into stock making be a blessing to you and yours. May the ingredients you choose remind you of the abundance of our planet and the purpose of its sheer ever healing, spiraling movements.

Take stock in where you are and how you want to live your life. Soup is medicine. Soup is magic. Soup casts spells out of everything. No matter what ingredients you will have the confidence to create nourishing soup miracles.

Andiamo!



## CHAPTER 6

# WE'VE GOT BEEF SPICY MUSHROOM SOUP

"MA. You know we've got beef."

"Make nice with your brother."

"What I do?"

"You know what you did to provoke him."

"It's nothing."

"It's not nothing."

She was often right. As a matter of fact, she loved being right above all else.

"What's wrong can never be made right."

This line from *Moonstruck* was the unofficial origin story of our spicy mushroom soup-off. It was how the brothers worked things through. Quoting it never failed to hit the nail on the head. One of us would shout it like Nicolas Cage in the bakery scene, and the other would dissolve into laughter. Every Italian knows the rivalrous battle between brothers, loud, ridiculous and full of spicy love.

Consider how easy it is for one brother to slight another. Imagine a sibling who pops out of the womb and trash-talks everyone as soon as he can talk and walk. Consequences of past actions were sometimes irreversible and couldn't be fixed. But other times—

WELL...

There was one reconciliation ritual practiced in our home.

A spicy mushroom soup-off.

A "Hot Ones on steroids."

A recipe for curing what ails you.

Sicilians love wild mushrooms, especially porcini, the "king of mushrooms." For the first soup-off, it was decided that mushrooms were the perfect carrier for the heat challenge. Earthy in flavor, spongy enough to soak up spice. A mix of fresh wild mush-

## WE'VE GOT BEEF SPICY MUSHROOM SOUP

rooms was ideal, but in a pinch, button mushrooms and dried porcini worked fine. Sometimes the competition even began with a foraging trip. We called them “field mushrooms.”

Consider the trash talker, jokester, the mocker, the funny guy who teases everything anyone does. With this, resentments grow and for forgiveness to flow, resentments need an outlet. That's how ‘we've got beef’ spicy mushroom soup came to the kitchen table. A challenge, a battle Royale and bragging rights for the season. The more delicious with heat loved by the family gets the most votes, for balance wins. It is designed to push the limit of what spice can be handled. Uncle Johnny was the one to beat. If Uncle Johnny can't finish the bowl. He loses.

Uncle Johnny doesn't lose.

The soup-off wasn't just about heat, it was about savoring time together as family. Owning the spice title. Pushing the envelope of pride. Working with nature's grace. It was yet another release of pent-up family energy, the micro-aggressions, the hyper aggressions freeing folks to feel their feels through laughter and flavor.

The mushroom soup challenge had its life cycle, its place. The fungi was the perfect amount of fun for *Da Boyz* with their divergent interests and fiery hearts.

All families develop rivalries, we know each other so well, it's easy to get under each other's skin. It's natural *BEEF* would develop between this cousin or that one. Also, Uncle Johnny loved his mushrooms and heat.

“We've got beef.”

The phrase lodged deep in my subconscious—alpha, beta, theta, and beyond.

Whether it was Uncle vs. Auntie, *mano y mano*, cousin vs. cousin, or uncle vs. uncle, a hot soup-off was always fun and joyful. No one got too heated (well, except the soup).

My Uncle Joe and Aunt Rose took it up a notch at the annual Spicy Mushroom Soup Contest every early fall. Each contestant sat at opposite ends of the head table, where the reigning champ, Uncle Joe, presided. Gran served as referee.

*“Mangiare con gli occhi.” To devour with one's eyes.*

The contest went spoonful by spoonful, bowl by bowl until one cried ‘Uncle!’ Dropping out. Whoever could eat the most of each other's hot and spicy soup would be declared a winner. Lots of spontaneous sweating from the heat. We had milk and water to soothe overheated tongues and any bruised egos.

We got a lot of joy out of who could handle the heat of the mushroom soup-off.

All in good fun.

The idea of a spicy Sicilian mushroom soup is the wake-up call for the inner Italian. It was the cry to inspire grand adventures and to live in connection with dreams fulfilled.

Sweating through the heat of this soup, this spicy, hot ones, returned and released me from the unknown traumas accumulated from the year. Freeing me to begin again.

And, for Sicilian's we loved a good annual tradition. Tradition. Tradition!

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Everything's under control. Except, if you can't take the heat. This soup reminds all of us, you / we can handle the heat.

*"I ain't no freakin' monument to justice! I lost my hand! I lost my bride! Johnny has his hand! Johnny has his bride! You want me to take my heartache, put it away, and forget?"* The drama of it all, pure Moonstruck

*We've Got Beef Spicy Mushroom Soup* allows you to move through the any sibling jealousy, petty beefs, and smooth out the win at all costs pain and trauma of life. It opens wounds to heal them.

The world wants to heal you, love you, support you. This soup eases the gears. Some in our family called it Zuppa di Funghi Siciliana.

My mustached competitive Uncle Joe was the undisputed heavy-heat champion of the soup table. There was never a shortage of new contenders and a whole lot of taste testers.

Biting into a mushroom not knowing if it would blow the roof off, was like riding a roller coaster of spice. Pure suspense, and pure chaos.

### **WE'VE GOT BEEF SPICY MUSHROOM SOUP**

Knock the chip off your shoulder salve. Hot red peppers straight from the garden get their moment to shine in this bold, umami-rich soup. It's a fiery love letter to sibling rivalry, a pot where you can toss your frustrations, your humor, your heart—and let the magic simmer. Exercise your demons with a wooden spoon. Have fun. Stir. Watch what develops. This soup reminds you that you can handle what comes your way, that tough conversations can lead to tender outcomes, and that a little heat can transform everything. Select your most heartfelt red peppers—drop them in whole or slice and deseed them with intention. Follow your instincts with love, onions, and garlic. As the mushrooms feed your biomes, let yourself rest easy, knowing you've turned fire into nourishment and found grace in the simple act of making soup.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Spicy, grounding, invigorating  
Earth adventures, connections  
Traditional heat

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Porcini mushrooms (immune support + deep digestion magic)  
Fresh and dried thyme (immunity + anti-inflammatory)

## WE'VE GOT BEEF SPICY MUSHROOM SOUP

Hot red peppers grown in the garden (heart health + pain relief)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 1 1/2 lbs sliced Porcini mushrooms
- 1 1/2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tbs to 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup white onions
- 2 tbs shallots
- 2 tbs (1 stalk celery)
- 1 tbs butter (optional)
- 8 cups of chicken stock/beef stock/vegetable stock
- Hot ones red peppers, red poblanos for zest and zing, red jalapeños
- Kosher salt
- black pepper
- 3 tbsp chopped fresh Italian parsley, or whatever parsley you can get your hands on.
- Fresh marjoram or oregano
- Grated Parmigiano Reggiano and sour cream garnish

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a deep sauté pan, add the garlic and olive oil, cook on medium-high for about 1 minute. During the cooking process, if you choose to use butter, there should be a perfect moment to add butter to build your aromatics. Get into your feels.
2. Add the mushrooms and turn the heat to high. This recipe loves foraged mushrooms or mushrooms from your favorite local grower. If you are using dried mushrooms, chop and soak in hot water for 15 min before draining and adding to pan. Add the umami 'mushroom tea' after the mushrooms have caramelized in the olive oil with your seasonings to create depth of flavor, it becomes part of the stock of your soup.
3. When the mushrooms have soaked up all the oil, add some salt and pepper and turn the heat down to low. Stir with a wooden spoon and wait for the mushrooms to release their water which should happen pretty quickly.
4. Turn the heat back to high and boil off the water, stirring frequently. This should take a few minutes.
5. Taste and add more salt if needed. Add the parsley, give it a stir, the heat movement from low to high gives all kinds of alchemical, caramelizing joy.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

6. Sautéed mushrooms are a flavorful and easy addition to any dish. Get comfortable with having mushrooms around and use them to liven up your kitchen. Have fun lightly cooking mushrooms in olive oil with seasonings and favorite herbs. Garlic and parsley are two classic herbs used to flavor sautéed mushrooms, we sometimes use turmeric to kick things up a notch. Garlic is often used as a base for sautéed mushrooms. Parsley has a bright and grassy flavor pairing well with the earthiness of mushrooms. Both herbs work together to create a delicious, savory flavor.
7. Mushrooms are the necessary alchemists of the biome, microbial wizards.
8. We like to remove the 'sautéed' mushrooms from the pan and add a bit more olive oil and sweat the onions, then add the garlic, any of the aromatics (herbs) if you want you can take half the hot peppers and give a little pan frying love.
9. Add additional seasonings (salt and pepper) to your liking.
10. Add in your stock and the remaining hot peppers and bring dish to a boil.
11. Turn temperature to simmer and add back your sautéed mushrooms, salt and pepper.
12. Can be served brothy with whole or halved mushrooms for a rustic look or pureed, then topped with garnishes.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- A screening of Moonstruck and a big red from the Tuscan region.
- A swirl of cream and a touch of whimsical story telling.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

*"Che tutto ciò che era sbagliato diventi giusto." May everything that was wrong become right.*

What happens in the kitchen saves the world. Deep, earth connected mycelium supporting mushroom recipes ground you, nourish you and attune to a life well-lived (and well-eaten!) It keeps you connected to all that is. Leave any bad attitude behind and enjoy where the soup takes you.



## CHAPTER 7

# FREED FROM THE GRIP OF THE POPO SOUP

NONNA WAS NEVER SHOCKED by anything her boys did.

“Don. What are you saying?”

“Gene’s locked up, again.”

“Can’t you get him out. You are my Police Officer son.”

“Ma. I’m a rookie. I got no sway. Pop is down there waiting to free him from the Popo. They didn’t want you to worry. They’ll be home before dinner is served.”

Nonna furrowed her brow for a moment and nodded. She kept it all going, moving with a sunny disposition and constant actions. She thoughtfully planned dinner, for what she hoped would make her son Gene smile, but, still teach him a lesson when he was finally *Freed (yet again) from the Grip of the Popo*.

Nonna said she knew better than to ask what Gene had done. She birthed five active, adventurous, handsome, stubborn, quirky, loving, creative boys with a husband who was one of thirteen first generation Italian-Americans. In my eyes, and all those who loved her, she rose to every occasion, each turn of the road, every up and down. From the romances to the trouble making, to the tragedies and mistakes. She had endless ideas to sooth every scrape, rabble rousing or troubling event. This time she caught the sunlight on the yard with its patch of robust dandelion and dandelion babies reaching across what we could call, but we didn’t, cause it wasn’t, their “lawn.” A wild apothecary of possibilities, I now know. She must have been reminded of the beauty, power, stubbornness and defiance of these weeds, she described as the first call of spring for the bees to feed, and the tonic to support what ails us. Without a missed beat she gathered them, leaves, roots and flowers. returning to the kitchen cutting off the flowers, separating the root and the leaves. Each would have different uses, the flowers for tea, the leaves for soup and the roots would be dried for when she had a particularly bitter and deep healing requirement. Her *Freed from*

*the grip of the Popo Soup* would include the whole picture, the eat your medicine, bitter taste of the dandelion leaf in the soup, to balance out the fiery charge of the pepper heat. This soup would be medicine for what ailed Gene's soul. Italian wild fennel flowering in the garden would be processed down to the pollen from the flowers to use as a finish to her soup before serving, we learned it was like a salt but healthy, a chef's kiss from the sun. Just like that, her soup for a passionate young fellow full of power and purpose would help him ease on down the sometimes, troubled roads of life.

We often heard stories of my Uncle Gene from my Dad after a visit. My Dad was an amazing, charming, sharp, storyteller. He easily shared his point of view adventures sharing the tales of his brothers with pride, bringing us, or his audiences into peels and peeps of laughter. Uncle Gene, who never failed to stand up for what he thought was right, jumped into everything without much thought but a lot of heart and guts. If there was a fight brewing he'd be in the middle of it. The neighbors needed help, Gene was there. Town bully needed a beat down, no problem. Run into a fire to save someone, probably would, never had to. Thank G-d. He met each moment with gusto, a fiery red pepper cry for justice, head on or head butt, he got the job done. Gene was an artist, photographer, a rebel and a beloved family member, husband and brother.

We all marveled at the movie poster with a giant fist breaking through coal mining machines and plant politics with stars Sean Connery and Richard Harris fronting a bad ass group of worker fighters for the classic 1970 film *The Molly Maguires*, based on a true story of a secret society of Irish coal miners who fought bloody battles for the rights of coal workers by any means necessary, including dressing in woman's attire, bare knuckle brawling against heavily armed troops in 1870s Pennsylvania. When word came through the movie was filming in Eckley, near their hometown of Hazleton, and they were looking for actors and extras, Gene was ALL IN. The location retained its late 19th-century appearance perfect for the movie's setting. He got a job as a background actor, a coal miner man, a mine worker, standing up for worker's rights, fighting, rallying for higher pay and better working conditions.

According to movie lore, the namesake of the group was a widow named Molly Maguire who led Irish protestors called the "Anti-landlord Agitators." The gang adopted her name as their calling card when fighting against English landowners becoming synonymous with movements to support the working class. This movement transplanted to America with the expanding immigrant populations in North Eastern Pennsylvania.

It is said, you find your soul's calling in every loving action you take. We never failed to laugh out loud when my Dad shared the story of Gene filming on the set and referenced the poster, nudging folks to push past mustached hard macking Sean Connery and crusty Richard Harris to find his Bro, our Uncle Gene, in the background looking absolutely nuts. As kids the poster composite shot with him in the background wouldn't be obvious to a casual viewer, until, you pointed it out. There was Gene serving 'I chew nails

and spit them out as a belt buckle' energy in dirty, bare knuckle bravado. It is still burned into my brain. For years growing up, my brother would ask my Dad to retell the story. We'd laugh and laugh and laugh. What a wonderful guy. Such a great funny Uncle to us, showcasing the pure joy of brotherhood and never back down from a righteous fight.

No matter what kind of trouble the boys got into, my Granny, our Nonna, would pull up some root vegetables from the farm, her garden, add some spices, seasoning and feed the family loving care in soup form. The Lutz family of brothers, neighbors and friends went through their teen years and early twenties with what we'll call her '*Forget Your Troubles*' Soups.

This particularly wonderful *Freed From the Grip of the Popo Soup* recipe returned to me in a dream. Yes. It came to me as a dream within a dream of loving activism in the form of a neighborhood garden. It is when the dandelions started speaking to me. I call it the "Dandelion monologues." This is the soup you want to make to spark and nourish the revolution. To honor your incarnation. To be the kind of person who takes a stand for others, for what is right, just, and simply honors the ingredients, exactly as they are. Dropping ever deeper, ever more immersed into the love of soup that honors life's struggles.

Dandelions are everywhere for a reason. Their bitter and slightly sweet taste clears stagnation, particularly in the liver, gallbladder, and digestive systems, by stimulating bile production, clearing body heat, and promoting detoxification. The root is nourishing to the parasympathetic systems and Blood, the leaves act as a diuretic and provide nutrients, and the flowers calm the head and heart, reduce anxiety, and clear emotional stagnation. It's a perfect balm for the mind, body and spirit.

Every revolution of the heart requires nourishment. strength of steel, a foundation of wellness, something to rely on beyond what you can see in the moment. This is the power of our ancestors, the shoulders on which we stand. And, this is the power of our connection to all that is, free of time and space. We together have the power for good, for peace, for nourishment, for goodness, for deliciousness surrounding us at all times. Liberation requires us to take every day loving actions. These soups I remake become nourishment for the care and work for our communities.

This is a powerful woman born soup for her boys. For a future they would lead, for the wives they would meet, for the children they would have, for the stories, who in their sharing, live on. The power of a woman's work through the world we continue to bless and know and become. This is the way we connect through ingredients, the fire of alchemy, tradition, remembrance, and a full inner fire to do the work that must be done, to take the actions required to support our neighborhoods, our communities, and our livelihoods, our very beingness for what is right for the common good, from the ground up, from the soil and soul of the people who will not be slaves again.

The question of 'What radicalized you' may be different for each of us. A landlord raising the rent to squeeze out a longtime tenant forcing them to move. Gentrification.

## FREED FROM THE GRIP OF THE POPO SOUP

Violence against women. A layoff after giving your all, your health, a cancer scare, loyalty and effort to a company who tosses you aside. Watching our environment decay as toxic chemicals ruin our biome. Whatever brings you to the fight, encourages you to take loving action, we are here for it.

As more and more of us join the love movement, remembering we are here to love each other, uplift and support the worlds we inhabit, to stand for community care, to love our neighbors without reserve and to build connections for wellness, regardless of what comes down the pike. Resilience is our birthright.

We are a part of decolonizing our bodies with each bowl of soup, born of the land, each recipe shared one by one offering atonement and forgiveness. The magic and miracles we bring to life through *Everything is Soup*, all the wisdom and traditions of this, our, Sicilian family, making soup, telling stories, building familia and growing together, is a healing of connectivity you are now participating in.

The message of *Free Yourself from the Grip of the Popo Soup* is offered up in the long tradition of freedom fighters acting with loving power for what we know to be the best of the best, the soup of the soup, the love of the love. The dream a reality for a better world. For the body, mind and spirit for nourishment and for foundational wellness.

Being a soup maker, a souper, is one of building common ground. It is the core work of being a fierce loving maker. It is being nourished and nourishing others in times of abundance and in scarcity, when fear, anxiety, terrible civic decisions create suffering, we have the courage and energy to stand up for what stirs the heart with each spoonful of spicy, uplifting, soup.

The ideas we share are here to spark something wonderful within. Justice is written into your destiny. This soup activates it. Say yes to the soup. No to Copaganda. Enjoy this evolving recipe for a revolution of the heart.

### **FREED FROM THE GRIP OF THE POPO SOUP**

*A liberating, spicy Italian-inspired detox soup to feed the fire of your soul and clear the path for love to breakthrough.*

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Spicy, grounding, invigorating  
Detoxifying bitterness with a touch of rebellion

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

- Crushed red pepper & garlic (fire + truth-telling)

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- Dandelion greens (detox + resistance)
- White beans (nourishment + solidarity)
- Fennel & Rosemary (clarity + courage)
- Lemon zest (zest for life after captivity)
- Olive oil drizzle (calming balm + after burn)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 2 tbsp olive oil (plus extra for drizzling)
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper flakes (adjust to taste)
- 1 fennel bulb, thinly sliced (or 1 tsp fennel seeds if unavailable)
- 1 tsp fresh/dried rosemary
- 1 can (15 oz) white beans, drained, rinsed, or rehydrated
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups chopped dandelion greens (or kale/chard if dandelion is unavailable)
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Salt & black pepper to taste

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

*An adventure for the body to free the spirit.*

1. Set the Intention before you start, take a deep breath. Whatever's bothering you—let it know it's got 20 minutes left before you let it go.
2. Sauté the Aromatics in a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and fennel, and sauté for 5–7 minutes until soft and translucent. Add garlic, red pepper flakes, and rosemary. Cook for 1–2 minutes until fragrant.
3. Add the Beans & Broth Stir in the white beans. Pour in the vegetable broth. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce to a simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the Greens Stir in dandelion greens and cook for another 3–5 minutes until wilted and tender. (The bitterness is the medicine.)
5. Finish with Zest Add lemon zest and juice. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve with Defiance. Ladle into bowls. Drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with parmesan or the culinary treasure, fennel pollen, or other vegan option, offering a flavor both intense and delicate. Fennel Pollen captures the essence of fennel's sweet, herbaceous profile, but adds subtle citrusy high notes to linger on the palate as a sweet kiss after the heat.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

Serve hot and spicy to process and detox after intense encounters with bad policies, endless bureaucracy, defeating heartbreak, or as fuel to nourish your soul to keep demanding justice for a peace filled world.

Optional: Grated Parmesan or for the Vegan option, nutritional yeast for topping and cheese substitute

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- A protest playlist or a Revolution in Jazz - A minor
- Nina Simone and a journal to process your rage
- Call in your ancestors, and your besties for support

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

Sicilians are a pragmatic bunch, “Chiù scuru di mezzanotti non po' fari.” *It can't get darker than midnight.* Even in the darkest and most challenging times, things are bound to improve. Claim your soup miracles. Use what is bitter, tough, readily available to improve any situation. The energy of darkness is not to be feared. It is its own medicine. It is the power and purpose of balance, incorporating light in equanimity. Now is your time to free your body, mind and spirit from colonialism. “You have nothing to lose but your chains.” - Assata Shakur

*“Never go against a Sicilian when death is on the line.”*  
—From William Goldman’s *The Princess Bride*



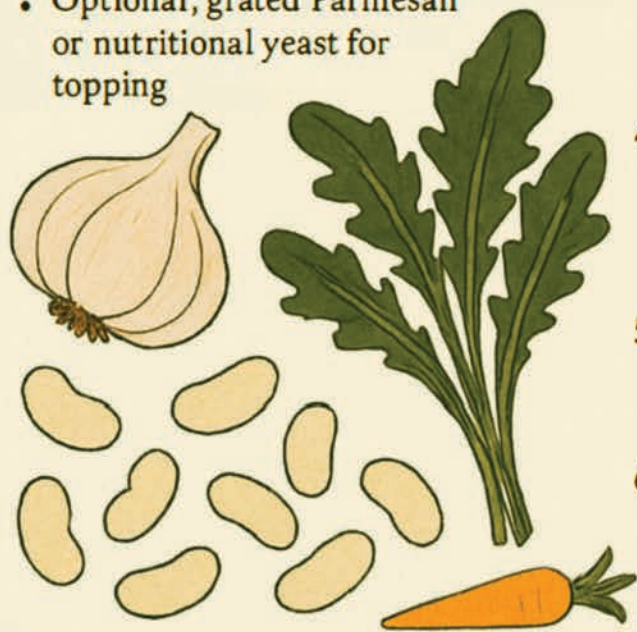


# Freed from the Grip of the Popo Soup



## Ingredients

- 2 tablespoon olive oil (extra for drizzling)
- 1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 4 garlic minced garlic  
crushed red pepper flakes (1 teaspoon to taste)
- 1 fennel bulb or 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 can/box (15 oz) beans, drain/rinse
- vegetable broth 4 cups
- 2 cups dandelion greens (or kale or chard as alternatives)
- zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- Optional; grated Parmesan or nutritional yeast for topping



## Instructions

- 1. Set the Intention**  
Take a deep breath, before you go.
- 2. Saute the Aromatics**  
Heat olive oil in a large pot, add onion and fennel, 5-7 minutes until soft and translucent. Add garlic, red pepper flakes, and rosemary to cook for 1-2 m.
- 4. Add the Beans & Broth**  
Stir in Vegetable broth. Bring to a gentle boil then reduce to a simmer for 10 min.
- 5. Finish with Zest**  
Add lemon zest + juice. Season: with salt and pepper to taste.
- 6. Serve with Defiance**  
Ladle into bowls, drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with Parmesan or nutritional yeast if desired.



## CHAPTER 8

# LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES SOUP

“DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?”

Aunt Gina’s giving, wise, kind—her sense of humor and grace unmatched.

“I think not.”

“Do you want people to remember you forever?”

We didn’t know the answer.

“What about wanting people to know you love them?”

That seemed like a good idea, even to us littles.

“Learn to make what aches and ails you melt away into something delicious, healed, and whole. Let love lead the way.”

We would nod enthusiastically.

“This is what we’re gonna do!”

She’d get to work, and we’d fall in love every bowl.

Olive oil would hit the hot pan, onions would follow fast, the wooden spoon giving a quick stir. She’d continue to pull herbs, placing them in a gleaming silver bowl we called the herb bowl. She’d toss in oregano and thyme—good *thymes*, as she liked to say. A bit of salt and pepper, and soon those onions would sweat out their goodness. The room would tilt into grace.

We’d watch as she pulled a garlic clove, separated the tops, and began to extract the bulbs, using her hands and knife to crush and chop the garlic. At the perfect moment—when hearts were full—she’d drop in the garlic to bloom. What a smell. What a life.

For a few lovely moments, we’d inhale the healing aroma of Super Gina’s *Garlic Thyme Heart Opener Soup*—or, as I like to call it, *Looking for Love in All the Right Places Soup*—one of my favorites.

You will need garlic. This is a good *time (thyme)* to build your arsenal of garlic adren-

## LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES SOUP

als, to say, “Not today, you unhealthy mofo germs,” and bust out the goodness of garlic in its rendered form.

I like to say, “Garlic every day keeps the trumpets away,” but it’s more than that. Garlic unifies everything. It not only wards off the evil eye; it works on cellular systems and delivers on every front—digestion, *poopy-poop time*, regeneration vibes, restorative free-radical upliftment. This is the time to win on every level, and this soup is going to take you there.

There are a few secrets you’d be wise to pay close attention to. It’s in these moments of patience and purpose—thyme and garlic—where the rocket of grace takes off. Don’t miss it.

### **LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE RIGHT PLACES SOUP**

This soup delivers a powerful message. We are here to love and care for each other in simple, easy, gentle, nourishing ways.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Mysterious eternal connection

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Acini di pepe pasta (nourishment + heft)  
Holy trinity of onions, carrots, celery (magnificence + nutrients)  
Garlic (mystery + magic + healing)  
Thyme (eternal divine wisdom + romance)  
Chicken bones (grace + determination)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 4 cups chicken broth (homemade or store-bought)
- 1 cup pastina pasta (tiny star-shaped or pearl-shaped pasta)
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp butter (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Lemon juice squeeze
- A little bit of tomato sauce or paste
- 2 carrots

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- 2 celery
- 1 medium onion
- Fresh thyme, parsley, basil

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a medium pot, add olive oil, and the holy trinity, sweat for about five minutes. Add salt and pepper.
2. Drop in minced garlic for about a minute.
3. Pour in and bring chicken broth to a gentle boil.
4. Cook pastina pasta according to package instructions (5-7 minutes).
5. Whisk egg and Parmesan cheese; slowly drizzle mixture into soup, stirring continuously.
6. Season with salt, pepper, and optional butter.
7. Garnish with parsley, basil, or extra Parmesan cheese freshly grated into each bowl.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

Use homemade broth for fullest expression

Adjust egg whisked amount for desired creaminess

Pastina in this recipe refers to tiny star shaped pasta

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Discuss your dreams with your partner as Shirley Horn's *Here's to Life* plays while you sip an ice cold Limonata.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

*"Camina chi pantofuli finu a quannu non hai i scarpi." Walk with your slippers until you find your shoes.* Love awaits those who are willing to take each step with loving intention. Use this soup to power your purpose in life. Manifest. Manifest. Manifest with so much love.





version of *Stone Soup*, her illustrations danced with joy and expressive power. I remember it vividly, each page piercing my soul through the veil of time opening a portal. Stone Soup was a folktale, yes. A story of deception for a greater good. A message, sure. We are greater for our connecting, sharing, being in community. Having a village.

Marcia Brown's version has three hungry and tired monks. This appeals to me, due to one of my past life as a Bodhisattva. These gregarious, intelligent monks arrive as strangers to a new town. They have nothing, and are in need of a good meal. The monks decide to play a trick, instead of asking for food, they suggest to the town's people they have a magic stone, which turns water into the most delicious soup. This intrigues the villagers. Each one has something to contribute. They let the villagers know they would have a grand dinner, with their magical stone. Intrigued the townspeople bring ingredients from their cupboards, old carrots, some celery, beans, herbs from the garden, each ingredient added was added to a giant kettle the Monks had placed the *magic stone* into, added water and lit the fire. As the water boiled, they added each villagers ingredient, one of the monks stirred, another chanted a spell to go along with the boil. They were making magical "stone soup." One villager brought his flute. Music played, and the Monk stirring the giant pot declared, "Grab your bowls and step up. Soup is served."

After all were satisfied, bellies full it was declared by one and all.

"This is one of the finest meals we've ever had."

We are so much more powerful together, connected, sharing with each other.

*"Cosa bolle in pentola."* The pot is so big, because it's full of secrets the mysteries of the universe unfold.

The stone soup story is one of the sum being greater sparking kindness, sharing, strangers who become friends coming together in community to be nourished to fill each other up with support.

Whatever is in your pantry, a tired carrot, an old onion, celery or ginger, spices and peppers and peas, you can offer to the pot. You name it everything has the potential to be a soup.

My dear friend Connie reintroduced me to the magic and miracles of throwing a stone soup night, in a duplex off of Melrose place housing four units. Her place, two neighbor roommates across the hall, and the longtime resident sisters by marriage in the two apartments below. The call went through the place, 'Stone soup night.'

## THE INVITATION

Introduce the idea and find a symbolic stone to go with the biggest pot you can find. The magic is in the invocation. A simple and hearty recipe spell to get you started and inspire thoughtful joy. Don't worry, be happy. In this night of stone soup as in everything in this book, the call for the soup spirits are there to move you.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Ask for folks to bring one soup item for the pot, from one of the necessary categories, vegetable, herb, meat, aromatic. This is an alchemical stone soup party. As the soup cooks serve a light drink and ask folks about their favorite soup and why and when they had it.

A stone soup night is a spark to connect with your neighbors and to build community. When folks bring an item for the soup. Everyone contributes an ingredient to create a delicious communal meal.

### ***YOU GOT WHAT I NEED MAGIC STONE SOUP***

A cheeky brew for body and spirit. A way to celebrate the village, connection and care for each other.

### ***FLAVOR ENERGETICS***

Elemental devil may care community building, carrot forward, earth celebrating, ritual to inspire the traveling spirit, adventures into the unknown and growing in your resourcefulness and confidence. We as immigrants have been on a trip, whether we wanted to go or not, where we know nothing. We have to make choices and survive and thrive. This is your reminder you are resilient, the earth is here to support you. Rocks and crystals are technologies. Use them to ground your adventures.

### ***KEY INGREDIENTS***

Smooth clean stone for grounding ritual (Tradition, Tradition! Tradition!)

Aromatics (of your liking for connection)

Meat (nutrition + comfort)

Carrots, potatoes (rooting + love)

Bay leaves (protection + purification + manifestation)

### ***INGREDIENTS (SERVES 24)***

- 1 clean, smooth stone (optional)
- 2 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 potato, diced

## YOU GOT WHAT I NEED MAGIC STONE SOUP

- 1 zucchini or bell pepper, chopped
- 6 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 tsp dried / fresh bunch thyme
- 1 tsp dried / fresh oregano
- 1-3 bay leaves, do as you do. We love the bay tree in our neighborhood.
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 cup leafy greens (kale, spinach)
- ½ cup cooked pasta or rice (optional)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Prepare the Stone (optional) if using make sure to scrub it well with hot water. This is a part of the living earth, the alchemical stone roots, grounds us to the storytelling, the history and the ancestors who demonstrated resilience.
2. In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, carrots, and celery. Cook for about 5 minutes until softened.
3. Add potato, zucchini (or bell pepper), tomatoes, and broth. Stir in thyme, oregano, bay leaf, salt, and pepper. If using a stone, gently place it in the pot.
4. Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce heat and let it simmer for about 20–30 minutes until vegetables are tender.
5. Put the needle on the record and dance for joy.
6. Add the beans and chopped greens. Cook for another 5 minutes. Stir in cooked pasta or rice if using.
7. Remove the stone (if used) and discard the bay leaves. Serve hot with crusty sourdough bread!

### **SOUPER TIPS**

Add cooked chicken or sausage for extra protein  
Spice it up with red pepper flakes or smoked paprika  
Toss in any leftover veggies you have on hand!

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Invite a new neighbor and serve a delightful anchovy toast.
- Radical kindness as you deliver quarts of soup to your local library to thank them for all the great work they do.

♥ **TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

“Cu Mancìa Fa Muddichi,” meaning *whoever eats will make crumbs*. Mess means life. Celebrate every drop. The abundant gifts you’ve been given, grow in your sharing, build longer tables, allow the mess to bring a manifestation of loving. May you experience the grace of paying divine love and wisdom forward.

Italians can’t help ourselves, we want to know what’s boiling in the pot. Everything wonderful is made even more wonderful by making and sharing soup. You Got What I Need Magic Stone Soup is a call to remember, it all grows on trees. The earth is so abundant to provide everything we need — food, herbs, fruit, leaves, vines, medicine, *grows on trees*.

There are truly perfect, absolutely wonderful trees, plants, herbs, and wildflowers available seasonally. Wouldn’t you want to create connection and collaboration with what is most alive around you — to blossom your power and purpose, to level up your soul/soil relationships, and to come to the center of your *everything is soup* being?

If you have a garden, enter it and rediscover the magic and miracles of reconnecting with nature. If you don’t, connect with a neighborhood community garden, a food co-op, an urban ecosystem restoration space, or a local farmers market. Learn about permaculture. *Trip the light fantastic* into these places and find yourself answering yelling “I want to live” call of regenerative freshness.

We highly recommend leaning into passion fruit vines, their flowers feed the bees creating delicious fruits, to be harvested only when they turn a purply plum color. Mulberry trees, too: their leaves for tea, their fruit, their shade, their joy. They will grow through the years and provide, provide, provide, all your days through.

Rosemary is resilient and sturdy, propagating like nobody’s business. It’s strong inner power will uplift all your soups, your worlds, and your heart. Put a few sprigs in a water in a clear vase for three days and it will absorb negative energy in your home. After three days pour it into the earth outside your house or down the drain to release all the bad juju. Keep feeling into your neighborhood, discovering the indigenous and native plants of your region. Be respectful. Do your research. Check in with your community to learn what’s needed, to trade, grow, and deepen your interdependence with all the things that add spice, flavor, and nourishment to your life. Enjoy your own magic stone soup evening by hosting a communal feast. It is the first step in loving our neighbors because we are our neighbors. She effortlessly hosts nights for friends to bring an element for the meal and enjoy a wonderful gathering. Stone soup continues in our tradition of bringing people together. The spark of our stone soup moment



## CHAPTER 10 I GOTTA GAL POTATO LEEK SOUP

EVERY BIG ITALIAN family has a guy. Lots of guys. A guy for this, a guy for that. As we've grown, and more and more woman have taken up precision work, we got a lot of gals to do what needs to be done. No matter what you need...

Car breaks down.

"I gotta gal."

Plumbing needed.

"I gotta gal."

Manure for composting.

"I know a cow."

A big ball of Provolone.

"I got a guy."

Square Pizza in a box.

"I got a gal."

Cannoli's

"I gotta guy."

Somebody owes you money and isn't paying.

"I gotta gal."

And on, and on. No situation is without this special power of the Italian familia to have a connect, a source, a . The world works on the interconnections of skills and abilities, each of us has something beautiful to offer. No job is done alone, it is in our connection and camaraderie all is complete. It is the same with soup. Filling our hearts, minds, and bellies with the wisdom of community care and mutual aid. And, trust me, you want a person to do the job you can't do yourself.

In a world of needs and receiving, you can't go wrong with "I gotta gal." As we've

## I GOTTA GAL POTATO LEEK SOUP

grown up, it behooves us to know our ‘gals’ are the life force of creation. “I gotta gal” has slowly replaced I gotta guy. Women have the power of birth, we gravitate to those who know how to do what we ourselves cannot do. Allow this soup to open to effortless connections for establishing networks of repair and regeneration. Teach through skill share, learn, exchange with folks who specialize. Allow your heart to be moved to action as grace surrounds you and you taste the sweet inter-relational experience of we are one.

The magic is in asking aligned Source for exactly what you need, so the call-and-response mechanism of the universe can deliver your order.

It is the ultimate privilege, inheriting a Sicilian cheese guy. My dad had a guy who would connect him with his favorite giant ball of provolone from Auricchio, in Cremona, Italy. This provolone strikes the perfect balance, not too sharp, not too mild, creamy, whether sliced straight off the ball or melted into our ecstasy anywhere you enjoy quality provolone. It’s an Old World essential cheese *for da flavor*.

Yes, you’ll hear me talk about the other life-giving cheese, Parmesan, later in the book. As we say in our family, *cheese is essential*.

We learned to use this cheese for many things. As it happens, provolone pairs harmoniously with the two hardworking friends of the *souper*: potatoes and leeks. My uncles enjoyed a good pecorino, which, I agree, is a sharp cheese choice, though it never hung in our garage. Pecorino Siciliano is a beloved ingredient in many traditional Sicilian soups and stews. Experiment as you see fit, use it as a finishing touch or to add depth of flavor to *brodo* and any of the peasant soups that include beans.

Potatoes ground us; leeks remind us of the importance of savoring meals and enjoying the company of loved ones. Bacon and provolone make you feel like you’re growing younger, bringing pure joy.

### **I GOTTA GAL POTATO LEEK SOUP**

An immune system booster and a “get-her-done” cellular mood enhancer, this soup is your kickstart for heart health. Creamy, comforting, and full of nourishing goodness, it’s delicious hot or cold — and either way you go, you can’t go wrong with the added crispy bacon. When you have support there is nothing that is not possible.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Confidence, connection, care  
Keep your friends close, your potatoes closer  
The roots that bind us to community

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Potato (community care + loyalty)

Leeks (anti-inflammatory + bone health)

Parmesan cheese (protein + energy + vitamins)

Pancetta, bacon, prosciutto baby (salt of the earth fat)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 3 tbsp olive oil (instead of butter for a Mediterranean touch)
- 2 large leeks, white and light green parts, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, cooked, peeled and diced
- Dry white wine
- 4 cups vegetable broth (see stock recipe)
- 1 cup milk (or half-and-half for creaminess)
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup shredded sharp provolone cheese
- ½ tsp dried / fresh oregano
- ½ tsp dried / fresh thyme
- ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes (optional, but I think you can guess what we do)
- 1 bay leaf
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- ½ cup chopped fresh basil or parsley for garnish
- ½ cup crispy pancetta or prosciutto bits (don't use for vegan option)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté until soft, somewhere between the length of Dean Martin's "That's Amore" and Frank Sinatra's "It Was a Very Good Year."
2. Stir in garlic, oregano, thyme, and red pepper flakes. Cook for another minute until the fragrance blooms.
3. Add potatoes and broth. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes until potatoes are tender.
4. Blend the soup using an immersion blender until smooth (or leave some chunks for texture).

## I GOTTA GAL POTATO LEEK SOUP

5. Stir in the milk and Parmesan cheese. Simmer for another 5 minutes, adjusting seasoning with salt and pepper.
6. Serve garnished with fresh basil or parsley and enjoy dropping in the crispy pancetta or if you like, a prosciutto should you so be called.
7. Pair it with some toasted garlic rubbed crostini, or your favorite bread of the lord.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Put the needle on the record of “*Ciuri Ciuri*” (Flowers, Flowers) with roasted seasonal stone fruits or grilled peaches, fresh pomegranates added as a sensual garnish.
- Grilled vegetables (red peppers, zucchinis, radish) with a delightful, sweet, sweet bacon to return all bad news to its sender.

### **TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

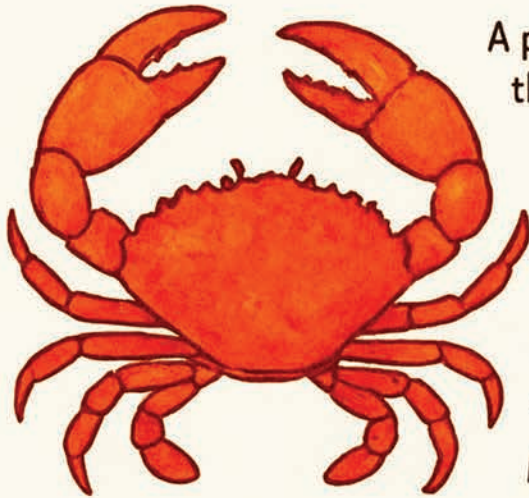
“*Riccu si pò diri cui campa cu lu so' aviri.*” *One who lives within his means can be said to be rich.*

When you gotta gal to take care of business, you are healthy and wealthy. As Frank Capra wrote, “Each life touches so many others.” It is the glorious way ecosystems flourish.

*Note on Cirri, Ciuri (Flower, Flower):* It is a love song in full bloom, beloved as a biophilic Sicilian folk song. It is the pure call of love telling the story of blooming flowers broadcasting beauty and desire to create collective heart connection.



# CRANKY CRABBY, COME AS YOU ARE, SOUP



A playful nod to the long tradition of the She Crab of the sea, kissed by the Sicilian sun. Lightly creamy, touched with tomato and lemon, and finished with a splash of Marsala, it's a sharp, seaside hug in every spoonful. Enjoy with good bread and even better company.

*Flavor Energetics: Spicy, grounding, invigorating, connecting*

## KEY INGREDIENTS



## INGREDIENTS (Serves 4)

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp. butter (or 3.)
- 1 small sweet onion, finely diced
- 1 small celery stalk, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 tbsp. flour (optional, for a slight thickening)
- ½ cup dry white wine (marsala/sherry)
- 1 ½ cups fish stock (or water)
- 1 cup whole milk.
- ½ cup heavy cream (or mascarpone for extra Sicilian flair)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

## CRANKY, CRABBY, COME AS YOU ARE,

Flavor: Creamy and luscious but still light and bright— with the tomatoes and lemon keeping it fresh, and the Marsala giving a Sicilian wink.

Ah, it's a bit of heaven and hell.

## Instructions

1. Warm olive oil add butter in a heavy pot over medium heat
2. Saute onion, celery, and garlic until tender and fragrant.
3. Sprinkle in flour and stir until smooth (like making a light roux — optional).
4. Deglaze with white wine, scraping up any goodness from the pot.

## CHAPTER 11

# CRANKY, CRABBY, COME AS YOU ARE, SOUP

“NOT BAD. NOT BAD.”

My Granny would say when one of us brought the soup for our family reunion. Her review, left room for improvement.

Such a perfect, meaningful answer. It meant my Granny could rest, relax, and bask in all her hearth wisdom had born fruit, made real in the world. It was the biggest compliment you could get.

Sweet memory — joy in what she had taught us, a manifestation of our listening, learning, and growing.

We gained curiosity, adventure, and the art of making strangers family over bowls of soup.

What is life but labors of love?

In Sicily, the sea is a second kitchen — the siren of soup where every pot bubbles with stories. We love the sea to soup pipeline.

Like the tempest of the sea, our houses were full of passionate anger. Folks got upset, and it wasn't hidden. It was blown up, dramatic, sometimes hyper, and, for sure, rage was exercised.

What if you wake up with the rage of a thousand suns. How are you going to approach your family, your drive to work, your experience of your neighbors, your co-workers, and deal with the constant involvement of the Italian family in your personal decision making. You'd put your rage in a pot, turn on the fire and make a soup with ingredients from the sea. Add, butter. You were feeling like a million bucks, free of unprocessed rage.

We'd spend summers on the shores of the southern east coast of North Carolina on

## CRANKY, CRABBY, COME AS YOU ARE, SOUP

Emerald Isle — fishing, clamming, crabbing, playing spades and generally making up sea faring, magical butter a plenty, memories, it

Seafood comfort in a bowl are my favorite memories: little neck clams, crab, lobster, mussels, squid - you will always find sardines and anchovies in my house — tuna, cod, sea bass, swordfish. We grew up loving butter, made fresh at the local dairy farm store. If we could dunk something in butter, we were mesmerized. The sea air made us sleepy, sunburns from fishing opened us up for the delights of an end-of-day full family gathering of what the sea had brought us through our daily labor.

And what is a seafood soup without butter? Butter was an endless salve to any tears, bringing comfort and delicious tastiness.

We grew up watching mob movies — with murders, trauma, and killing for the sake of territory or slights or pure evil. Rage is part of a Sicilian's heritage. Blood feuds, *drama*, the comedy of life. We understand pathos. It is why our foods, in this case, our soups, are soul-opening, soul-stirring, when life has turned murderous.

We are who we are. We come as we were, and we grow into who we are meant to be, with all our crankiness and crabbiness, to be transformed by buttery (or, if you're a vegan, not buttery) love.

In this offering, we know how to feel and release rage, how to work with the tide-beating heart of the earth, the magnificent, glorious seas. In this century, we hope the patriarchy understands how to process its own rage without assaulting everyone in its orbit.

Gather around for a big, soul-stirring bowl of delicious, loving soup. This *Cranky Crabby Come As You Are Sicilian Soup* blends the rich comfort of an aggressive, happy sea with the sunny, herb-laced spirit of the Mediterranean.

### **THIS CRANKY CRABBY COME AS YOU ARE SOUP**

A playful nod to the long tradition of the 'She Crab of the sea', kissed by the Sicilian sun. Lightly creamy, gently touched with tomato and lemon, finished with a splash of Marsala, it's a sharp, seaside hug in every spoonful. Enjoy with good bread and even better company.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Spicy  
Grounding  
Invigorating  
Connecting

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Crab, shell fish, chunks of fish caught in the nets, fished from the ocean (energy boosting + collab ecosystems)

One word. Butter (transformative loving + healing buttery goodness)

Three splashes of white wine, for what we would call *tipsy Pap*. One for the chef, one for the adults and one for the sea. (spiritual upliftment + easy joy)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp butter (or, 3 : )
- 1 small sweet onion, finely diced
- 1 small celery stalk, finely diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp flour (optional, for a slight thickening)
- ¼ cup dry white wine (marsala / sherry)
- 1 ½ cups fish stock (or water)
- 1 cup whole milk
- ½ cup heavy cream (or mascarpone for extra Sicilian flair)
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved (or ¾ cup crushed canned San Marzano tomatoes)
- 1 lb fresh lump crabmeat, shell fish, chunks of fish meat, whatever you like.
- Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
- Salt and white pepper, to taste
- Fresh parsley, chopped
- Lemon zest and lemon juice, for finishing
- Splash of dry Marsala wine (optional)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Warm olive oil and butter in a heavy pot over medium heat.
2. Sauté onion, celery, and garlic until tender and fragrant.
3. Sprinkle in flour and stir until smooth (like making a light roux — optional).
4. Deglaze with white wine, scraping up any goodness from the pot.
5. Stir in the tomatoes and let them soften.
6. Pour in fish stock, milk, and cream (or mascarpone).
7. Bring to a gentle simmer — do not boil!
8. Add crabmeat, seasoning with salt, white pepper, and red pepper flakes.

## CRANKY, CRABBY, COME AS YOU ARE, SOUP

9. Just before serving, stir in lemon zest, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a splash of Marsala.
10. Sprinkle with parsley and serve hot with grilled bread.

Creamy and luscious but still light and bright with the tomatoes and lemon keeping it fresh, and the Marsala giving a Sicilian wink. Ah, it's a bit of heaven and hell.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Screaming into a pillow and making a rage list to burn and release.
- Sinatra's version of *Bewitched, bothered and bewildered* and a Peroni poured into a chilled beer glass.
- If you're feeling a wee bit cheesy. Grill it between some bread and cut it into squares to nosh on with this delight of a soup.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"A tavola nun si invecchia," meaning *At the table, no one grows old*. Community, connection, and coming together at the table — especially with good company and good food — serve the soul. No time is ever wasted with friends; they make you feel younger and more at ease. "Cui cerca, trova; cui sècuta, vinci." *Who seeks, finds; who perseveres, wins*.

The slightest irritation, crankiness is a symptom of unprocessed rage.

Let this moment of cranky, crabby soup making unburden what has gone off course, has gone wrong, let your rage go into the pot, allow it to sweeten with the power of the sea with each spoonful.

"Accunciari l'anima."

*Come as you are.*





## CHAPTER 12

# I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU PASTA E FAGIOLI

“WHAT’S your soup of the day?”

“Cauliflower.”

A deeply pregnant pause.

A bead of sweat forming on the waiters forehead.

My Dad drills in.

“Do you have pasta e fagioli?”

“Ummm.”

Something about the way my Dad asked, they never wanted to say no.

When a pot of *Pasta e Fagioli* is simmering, you know, the world is about to be made right.

Pasta e fagioli was my dad’s favorite before I understood it was the soup my Nonna made for my Grandfather in their early days together before all their sons were born. My dad, James Howard Lutz, was named after his father, James Bernard Lutz. He was his father’s son. An amazing storyteller and he loved to laugh, and, he loved pasta e fagioli.

“Do you have pasta e fagioli?”

Without fail. If they had it, he would order it and juuuuudge the level of success of the restaurant on their ability to excel on this dish. Its small pasta, tubetti, and beans, cannellini or borlotti, olive oil, garlic, onions, spices, stewed tomato or tomato paste, delighted my Dad.

When you hear pasta fagioli, you probably think about the tomato-based soup with broth, beans, and maybe even sausage or ground beef. There is also the white, no tomato version of this soup and the many heated feelings about the correct way to make this dish. My Dad, Jim, Jimmy Jr. loved all versions. It was with pure joy he devoured this soup.

No moment to battle about food was ever passed up.

'Red beans or white?'

'Red.'

'No, no, no, you can't use red beans.'

"Garlic?"

"Always."

"No, no, no, you don't put garlic in it."

"Well, you don't put tomatoes in it."

"Of course you put tomatoes in it!"

"Then it's too much like minestrone."

I don't remember my Mom ever making it. She intuitively knew it was for others to prepare, to be ordered out, to explore and experiment and to allow my Dad to savor his rituals, as a balm to whatever he gained from being an undercover Italian restaurant pasta e fagioli critic.

We'd wait in anticipation at the table for the words to be asked of the fine dining waiter.

"What's the soup of the day?"

"Cheddar broccoli."

And, after a deliberate pause.

"Do you have pasta e fagioli?"

"Ummm."

It's not for everyone, but when done right, it is a soul nourisher, hitting deep into the guttural 'honoring yourself' nether regions. Pasta e fagioli has an element of personality and freedom expressing out of basic, humble, ingredients. It is meant to be a friendly introduction to being alive in community. It varies in so many delicious ways and takes you on a delightful spin around the garden lead by the heart.

Whenever I felt lost in a country or a wrong turn, on the wrong road in a city here or there, it was a lantern in the darkness returning me to found, providing a connection across language, time and space. Whether singing '*That's Amore*' in my early days of Los Angeles, California at the *C&O Restaurant* in Marina Del Ray convivial, throwback, known for its table red wine, garlic rolls, generous portions and traditional singing servers.

The song "That's Amore," by Warren and Brooks (OG singer, Dean Martin), includes the rhyme, "When the stars make you drool, just like *Pasta e fagioli*, that's amore." *Pasta e fagioli* was among Dean Martin's favorite foods, he considered it a musical extravaganza in a bowl. If you have a heart, and I know you do, this is the soup that makes souls sing. The origin story of love. A simple peasant dish made with abundantly available beans, the heart warming romance interweaving homeland traditions into the new world. Pasta e fagioli demands you shine.

I'm blessed to have learned the ins and outs of the dish, remembering the main lesson from my grandmother,

"When you are cooking for family, everyone is family."

What is soup but a delicious offering of love. What is soup but the sweet kiss of a marriage of ingredients so well told its story delights and nourishes the stomachs and hearts of all who partake. What is soup but the deep flourishing connection to all that is, all that is so willing to contribute it's essential thoughts, tastes, seasons and grace to the whole. The delicious transformative alchemy that takes place when love surrounds individual ingredients making them something sweet, delicious, loving, nourishing brew. Your Cousin Rocco, your Uncle Barry, Aunt Janet, Cousin Tony, the memories of watching Gran Nonna making the Sunday meal, the world made new for the annual family reunion at the farm in the Poconos, all the things that bring us to the memories of our childhood, the center of our soul, that which soaked into our eyes, hearts and minds to carry on.

Pennsylvania in the winter season is coldy moldy. Snow banks often way taller than us kids, we played in the afternoon and when we all sat down to dinner for a steaming bowl of pasta d fagioli. Our chills comforted and our camaraderie flourished at the family dinner table, stories shared from everyone's day.

"*Cadere (o cascare) a fagiolo*" means when something happens at the right moment, with perfect timing, dating back to ancient times when farmers always had beans ("fagioli") at their houses because they were cheap and easy to store. If a pilgrim came unexpectedly, people would say they "*capitavano a fagiolo*," aka *when lunch was already on the table. Lunch was beans.*

Pasta e fagioli leads you to all kinds of delicious dalliances. Imagine each spoon dipping into the bowl creating a spell for a lifetime, hitting the penultimate Whitney Houston, *The Bodyguard* Kevin Costner in his juicy prime world of care and protection. AND, when it's on the table, you always know, I, I, IIIIII-ia-IIII willlllll alwaaaaaaaays, LOVE YOU.

My Nonna knew, Garlic is your bestie, it is your, 'I will always love you' bodyguard of the heart, your hired delicioso assassin. She had a big crush on Kevin Costner. Garlic protects and cares for your very soul. Be at one with your garlic. Namaste it all in preparation to alchemize every loving spell brewing in your pot.

"Beans keep you grounded, pasta keeps you going, and garlic keeps everyone honest."

Garlic will be your constant companion, an extra layered protective agent for more love and healing. Use it often. Use it well. As my Nonna liked to say...

"More garlic. Eh."

Every time we were out to dinner and *Pasta e fagioli* was on the menu, my dad ordered it and we all loved to hear the review. I thought little of this until the moment I asked him late, late, late in the final moments of grace of his life with a pancreatic cancer terminal illness,

## I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU PASTA E FAGIOLI

“What can we serve you? What would support you? What would guide you home? What do you want to eat?”

“Is Pasta e Fagioli on the menu?”

A pasta fazool and her memories are sometimes parted.

The Italian American version of pasta e fagioli is called pasta fazool, For my dad a fagioli and a fazool would not matter. He never worried if it was a fazool version, he loved this bean soup even with the cross worlds use of a marinara red sauce-like broth.

*“When the stars make you drool just like a pasta fagioli, that’s amore.”*

Dean Martin had a favorite Pasta e Fagioli recipe.

My Dad didn’t.

He loved them all.

He would get into deep conversations around the difference between Pasta e Fagioli and Minestrone. It lies in the vegetable content and texture. Minestrone is characterized by a wider variety of vegetables and a more brothy texture, while Pasta e Fagioli is primarily a pasta and bean soup with a thicker, more stew-like consistency.

This soup keeps you on the straight and narrow.

It slaps you out of any cosmos of chaos into kindness and awakening goodness.

Don’t be fooled.

This soup will also punch you in the face as soon as comfort and care for you. If you are out of alignment, if you’ve forgotten who you are cozy up to this recipe. Be at one with your pasta e fazoolllll and the world will be made new again.

This humble, hearty soup full of tender beans, pasta, and garden vegetables is a warm pack a punch, embrace in a bowl. When served with a hunk of crusty bread and a generous drizzle of olive oil, it’s pure comfort, the way Nonna made it, with so much garlic, love, patience, and layers of flavor so comforting it speaks through generations.

### ***I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU PASTA E FAGIOLI***

Love is forever with Sicilians. Every spoonful of this humble bowl, is a love letter, handwritten in beans, pasta, garlic, and care. Sicilians cook with memory, with devotion, eternal and forever. Pasta e Fagioli is our way of saying *“I’m here for you”* whether in celebration or sorrow, rain or sunshine. It’s peasant food in the most regal sense: hearty, honest, and made to stretch a small pantry into something that fills the house with the smell of comfort. This dish is for anyone you’ve ever loved, anyone you still do, and anyone whose memory lives in the steam rising from your favorite pot. Tie your apron, hum a little tune, and make it with all your heart. Because in this family, love is served al dente—with a side of forever. Grateful for my Dad’s love of this dish.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Beans, beans, magic and miracles beans.  
Bitter, cooling, breakthrough

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Borlotti Bean - also known as the cranberry bean, rosecoco bean or a "pinto bean" a type of oval-shaped bean with a pinkish color and dark red speckles, known for their creamy texture and chestnut-like flavor (grounding + tender power)

Extra-virgin olive oil (richness + ease)

Tomato puree (tangy taste + thickening antioxidant)

Rosemary (divine aromatic + grace)

### **INGREDIENTS**

2 tbsps olive oil

1 yellow onion, finely chopped

3-4 nubs of garlic

2 carrots, and fennel (If you're not a fennel fan, celery is a strong substitute)

2 (15.5-ounce) Borlotti beans, can substitute, canned cannellini beans instead

6 cups vegetable broth

Fresh rosemary for a cozy, flavor snapping your posture into Sunday school position. (Can use dried rosemary, or dried oregano or basil)

Sprig of sage

Kale or Swiss chard—not entirely traditional in pasta e fagioli, use a leafy beautiful green if it speaks to you,

Red pepper flakes

– bringing the heat.

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 cup tubetti or ditalini pasta

1 Parmesan rind, save your ends

Grated Parmesan or Romano cheese, to taste

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Heat olive oil in a large stock pot over medium-high heat. Start by sautéing finely diced carrots, celery, and onions. This mixture, known as soffritto, is the

## I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU PASTA E FAGIOLI

- foundation of flavor for many Italian dishes, stirring occasionally, add fennel until very soft and translucent. Add sprigs of fresh sage, and, or, rosemary.
2. (Dried beans), add beans, water / stock, salt, pepper, and cinnamon. Cover and bring to a boil. Cook for 15 minutes then reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 ½ hours, stirring occasionally, adding water if it gets too dry.
  3. Stir in the garlic, tomato paste, and rosemary, and cook for another minute. (If you are using tomatoes)
  4. Next, simmer the soup, if you have a Parmesan rind toss it in. Simmer for 20 minutes to allow the flavors to meld.
  5. Stir in the pasta. Cook for another 10 minutes or so, until the pasta is al dente.
  6. Finally, add the kale and red pepper flakes. Cook until the kale wilts.
  7. Season kosher salt and pepper to taste and serve.

### *\*Make Your Own Pasta\**

There is nothing sexier or more ancestrally pleasing than making your own pasta. It is one of the more sensual acts of creating. It is why Italians are known for their deeply sensual. If you've never made your own pasta, now is the time to add this to your liiiiiiffefeee. This is your cry to connect with the ancestor realms, to bring seven generations of support. Inviting invisible shoulders to stand on. Every time I think about Pasta e fagioli my mind runs through the fields of the salty air off the shore of our Sicilian ancestors.

- Ingredients: Flour, eggs, and optionally a little oil are the basic ingredients for homemade pasta
- You can make fresh pasta with just a few basic tools like a work surface, rolling pin, and a knife
- Combine flour and eggs, kneading until a smooth dough forms.
- Roll out the dough thinly, then cut into desired shapes.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

If you are feeling spicy, do yourself a favor, pick up hot Italian sausage. When your insides heat up, with this additional heat, you feel the gut rendering microbiome of greatness. You know the Lord has truly blessed you. We get four sausages for our household, two sweet and two hot, so we are prepared, we've been known to have them in the freezer, cause sometimes you need the thrill only sausage can bring to your soups.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

While many traditional recipes include tomato paste or tomatoes, versions prepared without any tomatoes, are referred to as "white pasta e fagioli," relying on other ingredients for flavor and richness.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Watch Richard Pryor's first network television special and Sip: a big, bold glass of red wine with day two leftovers.
- Thick-cut ciabatta, grilled 'til it sings, spread olive oil, throw in the oven till toasty and rub with raw garlic.
- Rest in a post-soup nap in dappled shade hammock are a Sicilian birthright. Don't question it. Nap it.

### **TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Siamo una famiglia." *We are one family.* All you need is love. "Tutto ciò di cui hai bisogno è l'amore."

There are no greater lovers on the planet than Italians. We've been known to get into loving brawls over who's the greatest lover of all time. We love the world, we love each other and we love to make zuppa.

Love and soup deserve proper relational moments. Find what your body and soul need. Listen in to your loved ones, see what's blossoming. Love wants to expand and grow and flow, allow it to envelop you in its magic. Be curious to essential discovery. You will receive so much as you make soup. In your kindness, your sharing, the more and more you allow everything to simmer, what matters will come through. Give it all to your soups, don't hold back, and then, give some more. Love with wild wonder and joy. When Sicilian's cook, it's a sign of love to the person eating the food. That is why food is so prominent for us.

## CHAPTER 13

# ZUPPA DI PRIMAVERA WITH A ZUCCHINI KICKER

“IT’S AN AVALANCHE OF ZUCCHINI.”

I remember that summer like it was a green day, yesterday.

“What are we going to do with all these Zucs?”

“EVERYTHING.”

Bellissimo!

Life allows you to assume any position. When you have much, there is much to do. The labor of spring brings with it the miracles of summer, the themes of rebirth, softness, and green earth magic, bounty in the form of squash galore. Zucchini’s inner light, green, cleansing, vegetable renewal. When the garden delivers on its seedling promise and the zucchini are gleaming in the sun optimized for delicious goodness, it is the call response. It is summer vegetables want, to satisfy everything and everyone it comes into contact with. Soul nourishing, body craving, fascia building, musculature and skin soaking in earth’s radiant blessings.

The garden also yielded tons of peas, fennel, mint.

The family was split on fennel (*finocchio*), some loved it, others, if you asked them, couldn’t stand it. Fennel is a gentle gut-soother, popular for its practical magic. I suggest you use it as you wish. We love it.

My Mom wanted my Dad to live a long and beautiful life, which meant cooking light, bright, herb-kissed soup for softening into spring full of health and wellness. But, my dad enjoyed butter with his vegetables. Growing up with a gang of soup lovers, my Dad’s, love of soups was par for the course. Summer soups, winter soups, and a zucchini or a devil’s twisted squash (as my Granny liked to call them) or two was often on the menu during the summer season.

We’ve given you two veg recipes. One Zuppa for health and one a Zuppa kicker for

butta wealth. You choose. As you wish, it's all for you to decide. You have options and agency to choose. A lifetime of healing and celebrating with soup, allows intimate connection with the perfect space to offer insights, basic elements and give foundational joy for creating wonderful life affirming connections to your inner power. All this and soup. What a deal.

### **ZUPPA DI PRIMAVERA WITH A ZUCCHINI KICKER**

When the earth begins to warm and the first green shoots push through the rich soil, we anticipate the pure joy of sipping a bowl of bright aliveness, greens in a bowl. This soup is a gentle awakening connector — lemony, light, and herb-laced — like walking barefoot in a blooming garden feeling earth's electricity enriching your systems and emboldening your heart.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Gently cooling, sweet, and soothing  
Clarity, lightness of spirit like a soft breeze after the rain  
Spicy, grounding, invigorating

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Fennel (Finocchio) gentle + cooling + sweet + soothing)  
Zucchini (sweetness + grounding)  
Herbs (stimulation + nutrition)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 fennel bulb, diced
- 1 small leek or onion, thinly sliced
- 1 cup fresh or frozen peas
- 1 small zucchini, chopped
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 4 cups veggie broth
- ½ cup orzo pasta
- Salt & pepper to taste
- Fresh mint and parsley to finish
- Optional: a swirl of cream or spoon of ricotta

## ZUPPA DI PRIMAVERA WITH A ZUCCHINI KICKER

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In your soup pot, heat olive oil. Add fennel, the digestive whisperer, and leeks. Sauté until soft and fragrant (5–7 min).
2. Add zucchini, peas, lemon zest, and after you get a good caramelization add broth.
3. Bring to a simmer. Cooking zucchini enhances the sweetness and mellows out any bitterness taking on the flavors of other ingredients it's cooked with.
4. Stir in orzo. Cook until pasta is tender (about 10–12 min).
5. Season with salt, pepper, and a handful of chopped mint and parsley.
6. Serve warm with a dollop of ricotta or a drizzle of olive oil.
7. Melt butter in large skillet; add zucchini and shallots. Cover and cook 10-15 minutes until soft, but not brown. Combine ½ of zucchini mixture, 2 cups chicken broth, curry powder, salt, and cayenne in food processor.
8. Purée and place in bowl or pot. Purée remaining ingredients and combine batches. If serving hot, heat in pot and garnish. If serving cold, chill at least 2 hours.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Cue up *La Dolce Vita*. Sip an ice chilled prosecco, crisp, bubbly, perfect. The sweetness of the summer squash mingles with the sparkle in your glass.
- Sing *When you got it, flaunt it!* Crank up your favorite musical theater playlist and work in some jazz hands.
- Stroll after your bowl, step out into a warm midsummer rain. Let the scent of wet earth and blooming herbs wrap around you like a fresh basil bouquet. Zucchini soup makes everything feel more alive.

### **GIOIA MIA BUTTER LOVE LOVE ZUCCHINI KICKER SOUP**

When the garden delivers on its seedling promise and the zucchini are gleaming in the sun optimized for delicious goodness. Want to satisfy every soul nourishing craving and keep fascia, musculature and skin in a radiant glow. This one can go hot or cold.

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 cup butter
- 2 lbs small zucchini, sliced

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- 5 tbsp finely chopped shallots (about 3)
- 1½ tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- ⅓ cup croutons for garnish
- 4 cups chicken broth

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Melt butter in large skillet; add zucchini and shallots. Cover and cook 10-15 minutes until soft, but not brown.
2. Combine ½ of zucchini mixture, 2 cups chicken broth, curry powder, salt, and cayenne in food processor.
3. Purée and place in bowl or pot. Purée remaining ingredients and combine batches.
4. If serving hot, heat in pot and garnish.
5. If serving cold, chill at least 2 hours and serve with love.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

*“Ogni mali nun veni pri nòciri.” Not every pain comes to harm you. And it’s opposite, not every pleasure is here to love you.*

Be grateful.

Be loving.

Enjoy your garden’s blessing in soup form.

## CHAPTER 14

# WHATTA YA GOT SOUP

WHATEVER YOU HAVE IS A BLESSING, let's learn to lean into the empty fridge and bare cupboard. Let's get it.

Essentials for Soup

Pot

Fire

Ingredients

Stirring wooden spoon.

There are those moments you have to work with what you have. What you got is all you have to pull off a miracle.

It happens. You have snacked on a rotisserie chicken and the infamous words of my Grandmother, 'Always use it all.' Comes through as you consider dropping the carcass in the trash. It's time for a *whatta ya got soup*. It's time to open your heart to the empty pot, stew pot, your pot, pot, pot. Something to put water into and over your heat source, the stove, fire or oven. Whatever you have, whatever is left, whatever you can find will make a delicious soup. Yes. Having a few staples will help significantly. However, this is the moment to free yourself. To explore your inner improvisation and connection to what is essential and free within you, we know as the connection to all living things. Open your ears, open your being to what is alive in front of you. Listen. Listen. Listen. Allow yourself to invite in miracles and connection. Love and learning. Grow in your abilities by being aware of the present moment and its fullest possibilities.

Now. Now. Now.

Let's begin. Open the fridge. Whatta ya got? Check out what's happening in the garden. Urban foraging. See what herbs are available as you stroll your neighborhood.

Whatta you got?

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

On this day, for this week, I had a few things and my basic spices. I had the remnants of a picked at rotisserie chicken, there were some mild Italian sausages, I had purchased month, or months ago. My cast iron pan still had burnt butter, fatty remnants from a steak I had made last week I had left to perhaps make some vegetables, which I didn't end up having. I thought I had a zucchini but it was a cucumber. It is what it is. I had left drippings behind, caught in the hardened tallow of the meats drippings. Is this something I recommend. No. Is it a relationship pattern for me. Yes. I made a mental note. I had no celery, no carrots, no fresh garlic, but there was a jar of soaking in juice garlic bits from a brine. It is what it is. I went past the point where 'seasoning' on the pan and its leftover umami flavors were da bomb, and felt no guilt for not washing my go to pan. I'd add what I had to the pan, as my whatta ya got alchemical pan. Then get to work on getting my vessel ready aka bring out the large pot. Add filtered water, set to boil, and drop the leftover rotisserie chicken carcass dropped into the pot, continuing to fill the pot with water until all the bones were sufficiently covered to allow for the bones and cartilage to melt in the heat infusing the water with another form of nourishment, using the full carcass to create a base for more meals. Add bay leaves, the garlic you have, any fresh or other herbs you love, a rosemary sprig from a neighbors plant, sage, thyme, black pepper, a wee bit of salt, a lemon wedge, a rhythm or too, a spell or three for the good of all. Now, we know. Now we go. Let's all stay in the flow. This is the speaking words of wisdom and love over our meals in process, to imbue with the joy, whimsy and magic of the spell recipe and collaboration with nature's offerings.

This process can take many hours, depending on your mood. Allow things to cook until you feel as though you're at your maximum goodness. I like to go for hours and hours until the meat is off the bone and the bones have broken down. You can choose again.

Once the pot is brewing and bubbling, toil and troubling. Go about your business, clean, rest, relax watch some streaming and forget about it.

Your broth is done when you say it is. You can go all the way or part way depending on your time. The longer you go the more collagen, gelatin, bone marrow thickness will occur.

Turn off the flame, burner, stove.

Let the pot cool. Allow your life to expand in wonderful ways. Once it's cool strain out the bones, pull any meat off the bones. Onions, garlic will most likely have dissolved, if you've thrown in a bunch of fresh herbs remove any stems. What remains will be a delicious velvety broth for use as a base in any soup direction you may want to go.

The cast iron pan with drippings and fat from cooking steak earlier in the week now comes into play. This is the perfect place to tender roast any of your vegetables you are going to add to your soup pot. This gives them a deep flavoring, and a nice coat of spicing

## WHATTA YA GOT SOUP

and herbal delight. You'll eventually deglaze the pan and add to the big soup pot. Whatta ya got is of the moment. In the soup.

### **WHATTA YA GOT SOUP**

*Do the best you can with what you got. "Whatta Ya Got" Soup, the ultimate pantry-powered, heart forward creation with bold, curious energy and a dash of ingenuity.*

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Bay leaves unlock the mystery of the fridge and pantry. It's your moment to explore thyme. What is it all about... thyme. The mystics found thyme the most wonderful of herbs. Ask yourself what have I learned about seasoning, about energetics, about soup love. What does my body need? What are the questions of life I never have to worry about again if I make a use what I got soup. Work with what you have energy.

Where the day takes you. Go forth and love yourself.

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

- A pot ready for joy
- Love in your heart to make soup
- Whatever you got around the kitchen
- Gratitude for the life you have
- Never ending connection to the earth and all its charms
- Knowledge and wisdom of how to support yourself and your life.
- Celebration for everything, exactly as it is.
- Chop up whatever you got.
- A cast iron pan with drippings and fat from any cooking during the week is a perfect way to tender roast any of your vegetables before you add to stock or water, to give them a nice coat of spicing, caramelizing herbal delight.
- Add roasted veg to the pot.
- Deglaze pan and add juices to the soup pot.

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 2 carrots
- 1 medium onion

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- Chicken/Vegetable Stock
- 2 of the mild Italian sausages found in the freezer
- Bay leaves from the tree in the neighborhood
- Build your boiling loving pot of soup with whatever ya got

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Make magic and miracles in your pot.
2. Know your skills, your weaknesses and your strength to keep on going.
3. Gather your ingredients
4. Choose your base note, (water, broth, quick vegetable broth)
5. Cook soup as you wish.
6. Taste.
7. Explore. Channel your inner scientist, curiosity is the best seasoning.
8. Adapt. Repurpose boldly. That half-empty jar of olives? Toss it in. Revive the sad carrot, the droopy celery.
9. Adjust. Serve when ready.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Let your soup be a manifesto as ideas flow from your heart to your hands. Kitchen creativity is resilience in action.
- Reflect: Eat slowly, like you're reading a letter from your past self. This soup is a reminder: you have everything you need.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Dio ti benedica." *God bless you*, offering blessings, good wishes, and the extra, "Ptoot, pftoot." Warding off the Malocchio (evil eye), throwing the salt over the shoulder sage out the distress actions to cut the evil spells.

Sicilian culture values family, resilience, and the acceptance of life's journey. We do not wish curses on anyone. Unless, you've done something truly horrifically karmically heinous. Then, you cursed. And. Well. You must reverse the curses by any means necessary.

Meanwhile, we wish you genuine warmth, well-being, and lots of love and joy.  
Dio ti benedica!



## CHAPTER 15

# STUEY'S STEW

“HE WAS A WONDERFUL GUY.”

“Life was more peaceful when he was around.”

“He taught my daughter how to build robots.”

“When someone needed help. He was there.”

“He taught me how to give selflessly.”

Mourning those we lost catch us, drown us, connect us, sometimes startle us with the depth of its intensity. Details of the wholeness of experience are shared after one has gone, during a celebration of life, or in grieving circles. The vortex of connection quickens as the details of care, kindness, the small unseen things someone cared enough to do, the way they showed up in the world. Their presence, gone.

When someone passes from this life to the spiritual realms, my Jewish fam fam has beautiful words to honor life. “*Yehi zichro baruch.*” *May his memory be a blessing.* My second family is Jewish, they reconnect me to my deepest loves, my lives between lives, the absolute definition of soul family.

My forged in fire sister, Tamra Raven’s Stepdad, Stu Norman ‘Stuey’ Levy, died while I was writing this book. Reminding me of my two dearly held cultures, Mossad y Mafia roots. Tamra shared, “Quiet strength, steady love is who Stu was. It is how he lived. And that’s how I’ll remember him.”

It felt right to include our Jewish family, hearty, kind, loving stew to honor Stu.

You may ask yourself what do you do when someone isn't feeling well? What do you do when someone has a long illness? What do you do when someone loses a loved one? As loss settles into your bones. When there are no words.

We’re here to encourage you to drop off a stew to feed the soul of the family. And, it gets better if there are leftovers. What better way to show up than with a stew. Grief flows

## STUEY'S STEW

over a slow cooked meal as we celebrate all the wisdom and grace of their life. The essence of what remains when the body has left this earth plane, carried with us.

Many we have loved and learned from now only exist in our hearts. Their bodies given back from whence they came, as their spirit remains in all the joy and care they instilled in us. The lessons they taught, the experiences shaping our development, the tools to move through our lives and the letting go, allowing us to be, grow and do our authentic work in the world. Their recipes for a life well lived available to use, share and continue as tradition. What stirs us is what they loved, the love they shared with us and the ways their care supported our dreams, fulfilled.

It's a mixed bag like Everything is Soup. You put it all into the pot. The drama and comedy of life ever intertwined. A way to honor life by sharing a beloved stew recipe for Stu.

Sending soup when someone isn't feeling well is a kind hearted expression of our collective humanity. What is given is received, keeping us connected to all that is. Sending stew is next level and we are honored to include this Jewish stew in our Sicilian cookbook.

Transitions are not just for TikTok videos, they are a never ending beat of our daily lives. We want folks to know we love them and are here in case they need a shoulder, a ham hock, or a ladle.

It's with great humor and joy we give you this bonus stew recipe to honor stepdad Stu. His spirit is infused throughout. We attempted several old recipes from our memory banks, from cookbooks older than me, we invited Tamra's mom Linda to share her stew recipes, adding our traditions from the Italian market neighborhoods from the city of brotherly love. We settled on this totally Stu brew for a slow cooked stew.

When you get caught between the moon and the stars who light up heaven, the best you can do, is remember your loving connection. We move through the process of healing as we cook into a stews simmer as the ingredients in a covered pot. In my Grandma's kitchen this meant, hauling and trussing searing meat into a big heavy pot before we put it in the slow cooker. In the cook lab this is called a technique also known as braising. Braising is brazen in its need to be all of itself. Whatever an ingredient is, braising, stewing and grooving will give all of itself to you. Its essential ness will be yours. Stews catch the long train to everywhere on a slow and low speed. Consider the ways in which stewing will nurture your joy and plan a meal.

YES. I became addicted to stews during the hibernation of cold north eastern bitter cold snowy winters, but a stew, is a stew, is a stew no matter how far you go, the eternal warmth and joy and nourishment will bring you to the center of your being.

When you think of life, it returns in the sweet smells of slow cooking and the memories of a life. There are many delights in stewing. This thicker, heartier option, is a balm for the soul. It gives your monsters and demons something to chew on and quells the chaos for just one hot, juicy, delicious spoon to stomach bite.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

To stew is to root, to honor patience with ourselves and the world, what is slow going, steady and meaningful. Gather the power of your ingredients. Feel into what will make a grand healing stew?

Stew is the side-eye of soup — slightly slanted, hearty, and the earthier sibling of the souper universe. It is what we do when we're trying to heal the un-healable. It's the deep depths of the earth's grounded connection born over time. Stews make special memories.

It's said that when the spirit leaves the body of this human coil, it returns to our inner vision in optimal joy and most aliveness vision of our most essential, loving, perfect eternal self invisible to the eye, known to the heart.

Allow your perceptions to shift, experiencing the loss, inviting loving, gentle connection. Spirit may speak in many different forms, arrive via a dragonfly whizzing past your ear guiding you to see something you might have missed, a butterfly, whispers on the wind of the oak tree. Many forms, revelations and visitations. In the Italian tradition of making stew it requires thought, care, and thoughtful time.

Consider.

Stew is the no nonsense big boss of any pot. Filling and economical. Epic, deep, rich and loving. It gets the job done. Most of the stews we grew up with were part of a trip to the local butcher. We'd use brisket, beef chuck, roast meat, never the most expensive cuts but after a day of stewing, melt in your mouth, delicious.

Stew making is an antidote to what ails the world. It embodies what Jews and Sicilians hold dear, a relationship with the land in abundance.

When you think you can't go on, you can put a pot of stew on. We learned as kids the slow boil of a stew is the long game of cultivating stillness.

Stew is how you breathe life and love into a heart in need of nourishment. It's a 'trip the light fantastic' delight return to all that is good and holy and free when you taste that first electric, melty delight of slllloooooowwwww cooking grace.

Stew conjures up beautiful aromas of Sunday afternoons at Grandma's house, or being home from school during the day because a big snowstorm canceled all classes coming inside for dinner after making snow angels, sledding and snow man making to find the caramelized perfectly magical meat stew being dished out of the slow cooker.

You never know when you'll crave the healing only a stew can bring. We like to take a bit more care and planning with our stews and ragouts. There's something about a stew pot simmering in the kitchen that lets everyone know you about to get a big ole hug up in da house.

Stews are a forgiving food, easygoing and open to improvisation and substitution. They reduce pressure in the kitchen, since stews are nearly always better made a day or two in advance of serving. The finished product, long simmered and rich flavored, is always a crowd pleaser. Stew says something special to your guests; they feel welcomed,

## STUEY'S STEW

comforted, always nourished. To the family, it means there is more than enough to share. It is the depth of our everything is soup wisdom traditions.

Stew is a savory seeding, coaxing itself into being, voices whispering from the pot, warm up, and prepare for the opera of opulence about to unfold. A stew is the best of the depth of our beingness on earth when we've connected so perfectly with the earth as to become it.

There is no greater love you can bestow onto a family style meal than to bask in the effortless glow of stewed meats and vegetables. The world is reborn in a stew pot.

"Spira, spera. (breathe, hope)" — Victor Hugo

When we gather over the fruits of our savory homey stew the world is an open door wherever you look. May you find yourself in peace and purpose as you walk through the doors that open on your way.

STEW THIS.

STEW THAT.

IT'S A REAL STEW.

For those who miss their loved ones, who want to reconnect, who want to celebrate the golden chain of connection across time, space and place.

Each life connects with every life it touches enriching our collective eternal flame. To every chosen father, and father figure, who shows up with quiet humor, unconditional support, and radical love. We salute you.

Stu, this brew is for you.

"Chin Don!"

### **STUEY'S STEW**

Like a warm hug of safety and laughter, with a mix of encouragement, support and connection. This earthy concoction is all about coming together for the greater good, marinating beef with a pure gold spice rub to bring depth of flavor. Inspired by an 'all who eat this soup are welcome to get their ass kicked by kindness, whether you are Jewish, Italian, Vietnamese, Russian — all are one — coming together in sharing loving stew full of quiet strength'. This stew is rich and loving. It holds the well of grief released in the depths of power as it also offers forgiveness. See for yourself. This stew recipe is dedicated to Stu, his wife, his children and the kindness he put into the world.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Honoring family with easy loving get ready for the goodness vibrations

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Nourishing power of the ancestors remembering everyone who ever loved you is available to you while you cook and eat and serve  
Slow cooked caramelized kindness

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Marinated beef with deep spices (grounding + rejuvenation)  
Lemongrass and coconut water (brightness + joy)  
Ginger, garlic, and chili (awakening + soul spirit connection)  
Carrots and star anise (sweetness + depth)  
Cumin (ah, the warmth that makes the heart sing)  
Turmeric (boost metabolic processes + increase circulation)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 6)**

For the beef:

2 to 2 ½ pounds boneless beef chuck or brisket  
(cut into 1½-inch chunks)  
2 cloves garlic (minced)  
3 tbsp ginger (minced)  
5 tbsp fish sauce  
2½ tsp five-spice powder  
1½ tsp brown sugar

For the rest of the stew:

3 tbsp oil  
2 stalks lemongrass (remove tough woody parts, cut into 3-inch lengths)  
8 cloves garlic (minced)  
1 onion (sliced thinly)  
4 tbsp tomato paste  
8 cups water  
1 1/2 tsp Cumin seeds  
2 cups pure coconut water/juice  
2 star anise  
1 tsp ground black pepper  
1 tsp chili powder  
1 tsp ground mix of turmeric  
1 tsp paprika  
8 large carrots (peeled, cut in 1½ inch chunks for rustic, loving memories)  
1 tsp salt

## STUEY'S STEW

3 tsp soy sauce  
3 tbsp chili oil (to taste)  
1 package egg noodles (optional)  
¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro leaves  
1/2 cup Thinly sliced raw onion  
Lime wedges

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. First marinate the beef. Combine beef with garlic, ginger, fish sauce, five-spice powder, and brown sugar until each piece is evenly coated. Marinate for 30 minutes.
2. Next, heat 3 tbsp of olive oil in a large stock pot or Dutch oven over high heat. Add the stalks of lemongrass, allowing them to infuse the oil for 1 minute. Next, add the minced lemongrass and garlic. Cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add onions and cook until translucent.
4. Add cumin seeds, toasting them, to impart a warm, earthy, and slightly bitter flavor. If you are not used to cumin, start with a small amount and adjust to taste, it can be overpowering.
5. Add all beef to the pot, and brown evenly on all sides.
6. Add tomato paste.
7. Stir and cook uncovered for 5 minutes.
8. Add the water, coconut water, star anise, ground black pepper, chili powder, ground turmeric, and paprika.
9. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat to medium low, and simmer, covered, for 1 hour.
10. After an hour has passed, add the carrots, salt, soy sauce, and chili oil.
11. Simmer for another 40 minutes.
12. Remove the large lemongrass stalks and any star anise pods you can fish out.
13. Cook wide rice noodles or egg noodles per package instructions, transfer to bowls, and ladle the stew over the top.
14. Garnish with cilantro, basil leaves if it speaks to you, and raw green onion tops.
15. Serve with lime wedges on the side.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- A sesame challah bread, tender rice, or wide, slouchy noodles—whatever comforts you most. This stew doesn't judge; it holds space.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- Pour a quiet whiskey. Nothing flashy. Just you, the glass, and a moment to feel it all. This is a stew that honors silence as well as kind loving actions in honor of Stu.
- Leonard Cohen playlist stirring memories into the air and big deep bowls of stew to warm your heart.
- Add a lion figurine on your altar. Not for show. For strength. For presence. For remembering.
- Sip a glass of chilled Frappato—light, earthy, Sicilian—or a homemade lemonade steeped with basil.

### ♥ **TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Chin Don!" *Meaning 100 years of good health and happiness* or for fancier occasions. "Cent'anni e prusu" which translates to *100 years and more*. May your stew pot honor your people, ground your grief, and warm your heart and hands. May stew be your call as you heal, explore your passions, and nourish your communities. May this stew fill your belly, soften your edges, and remind you who you are. May every bite carry the strength of your ancestors and the sweetness of your becoming.

### ♥ **TRADITIONAL JEWISH BLESSING**

"Zekher tzadik livrakha" (זכר צדיק לברכה) May the memory of the righteous be a blessing. We honor those who have passed away, knowing their life was one of righteousness and their memory continues to inspire others.

We give culture and traditions all the meaning they have. This stew is resilience, for those who survive with grace in slow-cooked perfection. Stews ease us through life, after play, after work connecting us to the eternal source. They are especially helpful when we miss someone so much pain catches in our chest, when the golden chain of connection eventually replaces our loved one's physical presence — we remain in conversation. Through memory, through the steam of community care rising.

Eat slowly.

Love deeply.

Toast Stu if you make this stew

Play a game in his honor

Where

Sweetness meets depth

Brightness meets shadow

Love surrounds us all.



## CHAPTER 16

# LET'S CONCLUDE OUR BUSINESS FULL MOON LENTIL SOUP

THERE ARE TWENTY ITALYS. Within each region life, love and family, neighborhoods, location, the sea bring different desires and different recipes for the same meal. There is only one Sicily. Sicilian memories and foods with red and white checkered table clothes and huge, noisy gatherings, and so much joy. In this vortex of power, here's how we conclude our recipes of old for this new century, where a renaissance of loving soul, blossoming into a Tasty Mel's "Zuppa Del Giorno," the wondrous soup of the day.

Everything is Soup becomes a way of celebrating your life exactly as it is and inviting folks to share in its joy and its sorrows. It's love and its battles. It's disagreements and the traumas every life has. Enjoy the world, enjoy the ingredients your body craves and enjoy the sun on your shoulders as you have folks over for a Sunday dinner where neighbors become family and community care is top of the day.

In the sharing of these soups, we've heard back from a few folks who were comforted and nourished and in many cases enjoyed a healing only soup can deliver.

"My sick mom is resting comfortably after a hearty bowl of your soup."

This is a precious gift to hear. An unintended consequence of my love of a soup making, never failing to humble my heart in flourishing connection.

Nourish the dreams at the center of your being. Honor the growers, the farmers, and the workers gathered on mother earth to provide all the magnificent ingredients for delicious nourishing loving meals. Pray to and for Mother Nature for her endless enduring gifts of the seasons, of wildflowers, bees and birds, chickens and cows, the seeds, mushrooms, soul, waters, sun, wind, flow of all life's systems. Nonna's enduring love, care, joy, delight of serving, eating, dishing out bowls of soup is close at hand, the whispers of the pot, handed down for generations. We call this the *Let's Conclude Our Business Lentil Soup* because my Nonna didn't like a hassle over the summer season, lentil soup was made

## LET'S CONCLUDE OUR BUSINESS FULL MOON LENTIL SOUP

easily so more time could be spent with family. In our kitchen it's morphed into a *Witches Full Moon Lentil Soup*. A sacred soup for the two Solstice seasons, Summer and Winter, one we trot out to experience a world in balance, no matter what is going on. Summer's light for the longest day of the year ritual and as Winter turns toward the light after we experience the darkest day of the year. When you've eaten a bowl. You'll feel a chapter has closed and in its closing a new world is reborn. Endings as beginnings. Love forever after.

### **LET'S CONCLUDE OUR BUSINESS FULL MOON LENTIL SOUP**

Welcome to the cauldron. This isn't just lentil soup, it's a solstice spell in a bowl. Earthy lentils, sun-soaked vegetables, and wild herbs gather for optimal wellness. It's a celebration of the witches who knew their gardens fullness. Our Nonna and grandmothers knew their broths, and heaped out lovin' ladels of joy. A balance of fire and earth, warming your open heart and stirring the spirit. This soup surprises with its depth, delight and with its simplicity, and reminds you the humblest of lentils are sacred. Remember lentils are part of the Sicilian peasant food traditions of warm, simple dishes prepared with simple ingredients revealing thousands of years of tradition and a resilience to survive and thrive. When you are ready to wrap up an old chapter, keep this powerhouse soup in mind.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Feel the fiery heat and nourishment of a thousand loving suns.  
Experience grounding, loving, inner power.  
Enjoy balanced spirals of sacred geometry, as the pot is stirred, landing in a glorious bowl that leads you home.

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Lentils (earth + nutrients)  
Tomato paste (joy + camaraderie)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

1 cup each chopped carrots, celery, onion  
10 cloves garlic, chopped (could choose love and roast a whole garlic)  
8 cups vegetable broth, umami from a mushroom stock is nice here  
4 tbs Italian tomato paste (tube or can or fresh made)  
1/2 cup of extra virgin olive oil

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

2 cups organic lentils (green or red)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Sprigs of thyme  
Fresh oregano  
Cilantro for garnish

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a soup pan with a heavy bottom, place the olive oil and dry sauté the lentils, carrots, celery, onion and garlic. Sauté for ten minutes.
2. Blossom the aromatics, thyme, oregano, for the last five minutes of the sauté to infuse the magical mix.
3. Add four tablespoons of the concentrated tomato paste in the vegetable and lentil mixture. Stir and sauté for 5-10 more minutes for integration.
4. Add 8 cups of vegetable stock.
5. Simmer on low for an hour.
6. Serve with a big ass smile.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

A rule of thumb, 8 cups of stock to 2 cups of lentils. A little thicker, use 2 1/2 cups of lentils. Ratio is 1/3 cup dried lentils per person. You will get the feel of what works best for you as you experiment.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- A night of no technology and a sharing circle. Put your phones in the drawer and have an intimate family connecting evening forgiving everything that has happened.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

“Buon Appetito, Tutti a Tavola.” *Everyone to the table.* Invite your friends and those who may have transgressed you. Invite those who are new to your table. Remember, a soup of the day makes everyone feel the joy of play. This garlic infused lentil healer is the perfect dreamy sleep agent. After a bowl or two of this soup, you will enter what I love to bask in, the sleep that heals!



## CHAPTER 17

# GARDENING AS RESISTANCE SOUP

“HOW DOES the world change for peace?”

A young middle schooler asked as we worked to harvest herbs from our urban gardens to make some tea, what we consider to be the cousin of soup, in our Everything is Soup universe.

“We are doing it now.”

“How is that?”

“How do you feel right now, as you pull oregano from the garden?”

“Ha-appy.”

“Everyday loving action, connecting to the land, remembering the earth is so magical food grows everywhere including on trees.”

Urban community gardens have replaced the farms of my youth. To teach is to demonstrate. We learn by experience. Trial and error, wisdom traditions, working with the rich biome of the soil.

Everything is soup through a child’s eyes, connecting around herbs to make a tea as biophilic meditation for a renaissance of high vibrational inter-dimensional healing, storytelling movement. Our work uplifts, regenerates and reconnects humanity to its soul force. Tending the lands we love, started years ago with Mel’s Love Land.

We grew up with parents who loved the arts. We watched old movies on Saturdays after delivery the local newspaper, and when we saw, *There is no Business like Show Business*, starring Ethel Merman, Marilyn Monroe, Donald O’Connor, and Dan Dailey, with beautiful Irving Berlin songs, I was hooked on entertaining with the muses.

Soup, stories, musicals and the entertainment business are built into our DNA. We moved to Hollywood to share the stories we love. Under the Hollywood sign, in Beachwood Canyon is a robust, resilient community of home owners, renters, friends, neigh-

## GARDENING AS RESISTANCE SOUP

bors, gardeners, farmers and artists gathering to build a template for neighborhoods across the planet. The first urban ecosystem restoration camp emerged, land back work with indigenous leadership. Over 100 years in development, remaining largely unchanged, plots the next 100 years with a renaissance of possibilities. The great turning of our worlds continues, as the decimation, stripping, raping, burning, destroying, pillaging of continues, we do the work, showing up, reconnecting, talking about things that matter. We, each of us, have a choice to start where we are, linking arms with like minded neighbors, to weave a tapestry of learning, healing, returning lands to tend and care for the earth. The gardens, farms, land restorations, spiral out from our location in Hollywood, and we hope will bring light and understanding to hearts everywhere. Work is being done at ley lines, grid work is happening, policy is being accelerated, vortexes expanding, as the science of time and space, activate our inter-dimensional, multi-generational collaborations.

Gardening is one form of resistance to what ails you. It is a beautiful reminder of how invisible earth energies are constantly at work pushing, pulsing, forcing, growing in seasons and cycles. Return to earth practices. Return to love. Return to the ground of your being is one way through.

Find out what you have in abundance, MAP out connections, allow mana, exchanges, gathers to flow. Learn from what has been done for time eternal. Remember we share a planet. You don't need to have more so others get less. If you've made it this far in this cookbook, you know we are here to love and nourish each other. Welcome to the resistance.

### ***GARDENING AS RESISTANCE SOUP***

Love's going to see us through. Seeds have been planted, seasons are celebrated for the magic and miracles they bring. As has been said many times, many ways, "To plant a tree is to believe in tomorrow." Every act of growing, tending, care and work leads to a better world, each day more beautiful than the one before. Everything is soup stands for hope, resilience, power and purpose. There isn't one way, there are many paths, out of many, one. This soup is meant to fuel the work ahead. It allows for more love, more joy and more grace. We deserve wellness in an all systems loving world, full of harmony, grace and joy.

### ***FLAVOR ENERGETICS***

Fierce loving everyday action.

Expect more from the systems around us.

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Carrots (sweet + abundance)  
Onions (never give up + transformation)  
Celery (salt of the sea + crunching through life)  
Sweet Potatoes (nutrient density + power)  
Dandelion greens (sturdy + healing)

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 4 cups dandelion greens (chopped)
- 1 tbsp dandelion root (optional)
- 4 celery stalks (1½ cup chopped)
- 2 cups sweet potato (chopped; can be substituted with cauliflower)
- 4 cups water
- 1 tbsp lemon juice (freshly squeezed)
- 1 tbsp coconut oil (or ghee)
- 4 cups water (or vegetable stock)
- 1 cup plant milk / perhaps a nice cashew milk
- Fresh Oregano (always fresh oregano)

### *Spices*

- 1 tbsp parsley, fresh flat Italian (dry)
- 1 tbsp spice mix (coriander, cumin seed, sesame seed, turmeric, ginger, and nutmeg)
- 1/2 tsp mace, the coating of the nutmeg (powder)
- 1/2 tsp Himalayan salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper (fresh ground)
- 1/2 tsp cardamom powder (optional)

### *Garnish Suggestions*

- Fresh mint leaf, remaining parsley, cucumbers (fresh, julienned, dressed)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Pour the water into a pot and set it to boil under the lid. Peel sweet potato and

## GARDENING AS RESISTANCE SOUP

- chop it into cubes. Add chopped sweet potatoes, dry parsley, and dandelion root (*optional*) into boiling water and set to cook under the lid on medium heat.
2. Finely chop dandelion greens.
  3. While potatoes are cooking, chop celery stalks into small cubes. Add a tablespoon of coconut oil into a pan and warm it up, incorporate spice mix and mace into the oil, add onions with a bit of salt and pepper and sauté for a couple of minutes until onions turn translucent.
  4. When potatoes are nice and tender (about 15 to 20 min), add to pot with salt, pepper, sautéed celery, and chopped dandelion leaves. Mix well, bring it to a boil, lower the heat, cover with a lid and simmer for 10 min.
  5. Turn off the heat and add lemon juice. Using an immersion blender, puree the soup.
  6. Serve right away with a dollop of vegan sour cream. You can also garnish your soup with julienned cucumbers, fresh leaves of parsley, or mint.
  7. Salt and ground black pepper to taste.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

Serve your creamy dandelion soup with baked spicy tofu bites

You can store your soup in the fridge for up to 4 days

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Serve with cornbread muffin and homemade mulberry jam from a neighbor's tree.
- Get the vinyls out and put on Jackie DeShannon's version of *What the World Needs Now is Love Sweet Love* while you plan your next volunteer gathering.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Oggi in figura, domani in sepoltura." Meaning *today in person, tomorrow in a grave*. A darker way to resist. What matters to you. What actions are you ready to make? We propose you make each moment count. We are here today and gone tomorrow. The present is the time to express our loving hearts. Don't let an opportunity pass to be a blessing, to offer love in the face of fear, to lend a hand when a hand is needed. We like the saying, as *death will find me alive*, "La speranza e l'ultima a morire."





## CHAPTER 18

# THE GODMOTHERS OF THE GARDEN SOUP

“WHAT ARE YOU DOING?”

Italians find home wherever there's land to grow on, wherever there's a place to plant seeds. The family farms of my childhood, turned into an iconic urban garden living under the Hollywood sign in Beachwood Canyon, California. We have the same community gatherings and annual parties. We laugh and sing and make strawberry and mulberry jam when we harvest fruit. There is a sprawling horse ranch butting up against Lake Hollywood, a small Beachwood cafe, and a deep sense of living in harmony and connection. We have skill shares and songwriting and storytelling. We have all levels biophilic community choir led by Maesa Pullman called the Band of Singers and a Last Orchestra led by Derek Lightning and a neighborhood full of amazing people. We have a Hollywood Orchard, witches gardens, Oz garden, herb gardens, chickens and everything under the sun.

Walks turn into neighbor chats and you never know what you're going to uncover by taking a new route. A couple of bees zip by me heading to a strip of wild California poppies.

*Wow. So beautiful.*

I notice two stakes with black handwriting, one on each end. One with 'wildflowers' on it, and the other said 'seedlings.' As I was bending over with my phone to admire and take a picture, a voice from behind said,

"What are you doing?"

I look up to see a tiny elderly, grey haired, super short man in a plaid shirt and brown wool sweater, tan pants, sweet pair of new sneakers confronting me.

"You. What are you doing taking a picture?"

He was exuding strong 'get off my lawn' energy.

THE GODMOTHERS OF THE GARDEN SOUP

"Stay off my land, stay off my property."

"I'm admiring the seedling sign. I wanted to take a picture to give myself some inspiration."

"Oh. OH, yes. Very nice, okay." And then, and still, "Stay off my property."

I turned to him, backing away to just beyond his driveway and said.

"Thank you so much. What a great reminder how seedlings grow into beautiful flowers, brightening our neighborhood."

He pauses.

"What's your name?"

"Melanie."

"My name is Vito."

"Oh, yeah, Vito."

"Yes, like The Godfather, Vito Corleone."

He smiled a smile as big as his body. A twinkle in his eyes. Reminding me of my grandfather, Pap. An opening across time and space. I stepped into it.

"I wanted to thank you, for the inspiration."

He appreciated what I shared. He laughed again. We were present with each other,

"I love the inspiration because the butterflies and bees need our help. We need to support them and this is a great way of doing it and so beautiful."

"Something we agree on."

I got emotional, tears forming in my eyes as The Godfather, Vito stood his ground.

"Darn, I get all teary-eyed when I think about, you know, our natural relationships with the earth and how we can come together to support it."

He nods.

"Thanks. Thanks. Thank you."

I moved on. Oh my gosh, life is so great. People are wonderful. So grateful for him. As Meister Eckhart said, "If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is 'Thank You,' it will be enough." There is abundant power in gratitude.

*Thank you.*

Vito. Vito. Vito. Memories glowing over our huge family reunions, the annual gathering in August around my Leo birthday at the farm off Brick Yard Road, Pond Creek (Little Wapwallopen Creek tributary), Luzerne, Pennsylvania. Our annual feast in the beautiful mountains and creeks near the Pocono mountains. Wild flowers, and green wild grass blowing in the wind as we pulled onto the farms dirt road entrance off the main Brick Yard Road into the farm, we'd park our car among rows and rows of relatives cars, like the parking lot of a traveling circus, neatly lined in rows across a flattened football size field grassy area. It wouldn't take long to spot the crowd milling about across the visible horizon near the Pavilion with park bench tables.

"Are all these people related to us?"

“Yes. They are. Your great grandparents had a lot of kids.”

“How many?”

“Thirteen.”

“That’s a lot.”

“Each car is a member of the family, one and all, with their family, here to celebrate US. Coming together.”

It boggled my tiny mind, but warmed my heart. It was like a Sinatra song lyric, “how’d all these people get in my room.” One year my grandmother had wooden nickels made with our family name and an artist render of some part of Italy or another. It was so cool.

This is why I’m a part of so many groups, recreating the big family reunion through community care, connection, showing up and chosen family has been the center of my existence. I never felt alone cause there are so many Lutzers. Keep your friends close. Keep your family closer. Moving to Hollywood it wasn’t a coincidence, I’d fall in with an Italian Girl’s Night Out monthly dinner and support group for Italian women in the entertainment business. We even brought the *Feast of San Gennaro* to Los Angeles for some wild Italian times in Hollywood.

Our mid August family reunion related to Italy’s festival of Augustus. Every August 15th, Italy explodes with Ferragosto, a sun-drenched, food-filled festival where generations collide in the best (and most chaotic) way possible. It’s a day where Nonna rules the kitchen, and then the pot luck goes wild. Pap fires up the grill, and cousins, Uncles, Aunties show up to laugh and tell stories.

From beachside antics to countryside feasts where “just one more bite” is a loving command, this holiday is a heartwarming, hilarious tribute to family, food, and the joy of simply being together where generational feuds are solved with a plate of pasta and no celebration is complete without a family member jumping into the sea, or the proverbial sea. Our annual mid August Lutz family reunion was a tradition at the farm until my grandmother, Thelma passed over.

So many fond memories, ways the world was reborn, nourishment given and all the wonder of possibilities given a true voice. When I grew up, I remembered the laughter, the grass under my bare feet as I ran around as a kid, the benches and benches of food across those picnic tables, under the pavilion, our shelter, shade structure where we would all gather and eat.

It was ever the cool, animated, expressive, crowd, a mix of Italian family just over from Italy. Young, old, relatives, uncles, cousins, all shapes and sizes, enough to fill a basketball gym for a Friday night championship game. We hadn’t been taught Italian, other than curse words, spoken often, or what seemed like curse words, yelling at us to stop doing one thing or the other. The unmissable, guttural sounds of Italian being spoken, jokes being told, laughter ringing through the air and the need of all Italians to call out, inter-

## THE GODMOTHERS OF THE GARDEN SOUP

rupt, loudly express, derive meaning, or shout down someone's bad behavior or simply let there big, beautiful light to shine.

Every name you could think of was there, wives, sisters, daughters, brothers, cousins, upon cousins, and me. I don't remember my parents at these gatherings, it was a mass of Italians having a wonderful time with each other, so much to take in, so much to enjoy.

There were tons of planning for this our annual family August reunion gathering. The sunshine and heat of August in the lush Pocono Mountains was a gift to us before we went back to school. We'd hang out with the horses, laugh with the chickens running around, get stung by a bee cause we ran around barefoot. There were blackberries, mulberries, grapes to pick, there was avoiding bees, and there was enjoying the laughter surrounded conversations, with food aplenty.

The names like sweet summer rain, Maria and Anthony's children, Pasquale Patrick, Eugene, Lewis, Rachael, Josephine, Nancy, John Francis, Anna, James Bernard Lutz (PAP), Henry Francis, Anthony P, Rocco M, Francis Joseph, Rose Marie

The women who married into the family, Thelma, Frannie, Tamara, Judy, Louise, Janet, Judy, the cousins, Marcy, Cindy, Tamra, Bella, Johnny, Bill, Thomas, Vincenzo, Mario, Angelo, Dino, Gene, Aldo, Antonio, Henry, Jason, Krista, June, Emily, Alberto, Alfredo, Carlo, Geno, Lino, Roberto, Cesare, Enzo, Giuseppe, Guido, Marino, Paolo, Adolfo, Emilio, Anthony Jr. This soup is a reminder of the smiles, the sun, the earth, birds and bees of late summer gather. Friends who became family. No greater tribute to the loves we know, who know us than to celebrate the joy of mid summers dreams for tomorrow and tomorrow in a summer soup.

### **THE GODMOTHERS OF THE GARDEN SOUP**

A whimsical soup includes edible wildflowers, and a wee bit of leprechaun and fairy energy from the leaves of the squash with their twisted vines. This is a harvest time soup. Those of us who grow know to work with what we have, and if we can't use it all to most certainly process and freeze, can or set up for the longer winter months. But, as Nonna says, 'Always use it all.' Occasionally the squash were temperamental and needed more water to bear actual squash, or the squash were shy. We learned to use the leaves, just like we learned that mulberry leaf tea is heart healthy when the raccoons ate all the mulberries and my Grandmother didn't want us to be disappointed.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Seedlings for new beginnings  
Aliveness, raw, freshness

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Mid summer squash blossoms (softness + light)

Tenerumi, the leafy green from the squash plant (toughness + resilience)

Chive blossoms (bright + ready for a fight)

### **INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)**

- 2 cups tenerumi a large bunch
- 3-4 garlic cloves chopped finely
- 4 ripe tomatoes cherry, heirloom seeded and cut into dice
- 15 fresh basil leaves torn
- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- Extra virgin olive oil, to taste
- 1 potato
- 1 small onion
- 1 carrot, celery, peas
- Hot peppers (optional)
- Grated pecorino cheese (optional)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Sauté chopped vegetables (e.g., potatoes, onions, carrots, celery, peas) in butter
2. Add seasoning,
3. Add water, stock
4. Turn heat to simmer until vegetables are soft
5. Thicken soup, as you wish

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Stuff and fry squash blossoms for a delicious double squash blossom showstopper soup topper and never be afraid to add pomegranates to your garnish. Sicilians celebrate this fruit as a sign of fertility and abundance.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

“Batti lu ferru mentri è càudu.” *Strike while the iron is hot.* Take all necessary loving actions in the seasons of your life, for the flowering of your being.

## CHAPTER 19

# THAT'S AMORE, ASPARAGUS SOUP

WE ARE FAMILY. We know how to get along. Asparagus lives in the realms of *That's Amore!* A grand feeling of joy awaits the soup caster when they embrace the ephemeral, bright, trilling through the atmosphere as you celebrate life's most elegant vegetable. Asparagus offers energy boosting benefits with B vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber. Asparagus is considered to be slightly warm and bitter, nourishing the lungs and easing irritability. Who you love and what you love is important. It is meant to sharpen your spine, to spear your heart.

Constant cravings may change, but when you dip your spoon into a loving bowl of asparagus soup, and bring it to your lips and taste. When it hits your stomach brightened by a splash of lemon picked from a tree, you'll know the power of the body electric and your heart grows a million times. *That's Amore.*

Embrace and embody your, "THAT'S AMORE."

### **THAT'S AMORE, ASPARAGUS SOUP**

Bring home fresh asparagus. It can be done in twenty minutes or you can linger longer bringing in the fragrance of garlic. Get out that soup pot. The big one. Before long this soup will become your main squeeze when you need to realign with your inner power to get down to business.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Forgiveness, joy and understanding

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

- Asparagus | green or white (sexual health + adaptability)
- Onion | white, red (immunity + blossoming)
- Fresh Garlic (circulation + protection)

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large red onion, diced
- kosher and flaky sea salt
- freshly cracked black pepper
- 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp honey
- 8 slices of prosciutto
- 2 small radishes, shaved thin on a mandolin
- 1 qt chicken (or vegetable) stock
- 2 oz fresh spinach
- 1/4 cup of dill, plus more for garnish
- 2 tbsp chopped herbs like fresh chives / parsley
- 1 tbsp lemon zest / juice
- 2 tbsp heavy cream (or milk), for desired creaminess plus more for serving (optional)
- Potatoes, diced (optional, for creaminess)
- Parmesan or Pecorino-Romano cheese (optional)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Put your pot on your favorite burner, make sure it's a bit hot, just above medium, towards the high on the dial. When you have the feel of visual heat, add that olive oil (or butter), give it a 45 second heat up and add that onion, give em two minutes of free sweat, add leak, give them a good sweat for another two minutes. Witness the onion leak chop caramelize and give its form over to the goodness.
2. Know, in your heart, your herbs, salt and pepper, and joy are ready to be added into the pot. Throw in the whole vine of your fresh herbs.
3. Add potatoes if using to give them a little browning dance party with your base notes.

## THAT'S AMORE, ASPARAGUS SOUP

4. Drop in that garlic for another strong minute. Smell into this grace filled time.
5. Add trimmed and chopped asparagus (reserving some tips for garnish if desired) along with chicken or vegetable broth, salt, and pepper.
6. Bring to a simmer or boil, depending on use of cream for the recipe, and cook until the asparagus is tender.
7. Puree the soup until smooth using an immersion blender or by transferring it to a regular blender, in batches, as needed.
8. Add optional ingredients and keep seasoning. Stir in cream or milk, or cashew cream. Season to taste.
9. Get ready to bring in acid with your lemon juice, zest, and any additional salt and pepper to taste, as you wish.
10. Pour into bowls and garnish with reserved asparagus tips, maybe an herb top like fresh dill. Drizzle cream, olive oil, a pinch of chives, freshly cracked black pepper, and flaky sea salt over top, and /or crispy prosciutto.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

Cook the asparagus with chicken broth and onion until the asparagus is tender.

Should it speak to you, build base by making a roux, then stir in the remaining chicken broth, and bring to a boil.

Make sure to pull the full herb vines out in whatever phase of the cooking and serving process you feel it's completed its service.

### **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Enjoy this heart opener with your favorite, Rat Pack, Nelson Riddle Orchestrations and albums from the Great American Songbook.

### **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

*"Quel ch'è fatto, è fatto," What's done is done.* Let it be. This is loving, precious, simple powerful blessing. However you prepare your asparagus soup, know you are rich in the essential ingredients of life—love, peace and family.





## CHAPTER 20

# PLEASURE SOUP

IN SICILY, everything's personal, especially the soup.

What's more personal than pleasure.

We are here to experience pleasure.

Italian's are an emotional bunch. Sicilians are connected to lifetimes of pure wisdom born from the land. Sicily is a unique space and place an island of joy, refuge, tradition. Those who visit can feel it. Some remain forever changed by their visits to the Island. To be in the fields of Sicily's loving embrace, an island who understands the need for community to thrive, who learned to be a place of celebration through volcanoes erupting, and to know the joy of close knitted intimate connection with all that is.

Goethe described it as a "purity of the contours, softness of everything, the exchange of soft colors, the harmonious unity of the sky with the sea and the sea to the land. Those who saw them once, shall possess them for a lifetime."

The warmth and fragrance of the sea lives in the air, the gardens, trees and the luscious flowers inviting us to transform into our highest, balanced, harmonious vibration.

Pleasure Soup comes from what we call the giant silver herb bowl tradition. You grab the gleaming large stainless steel bowl and head into the garden to collect herbs and greens, what is most alive. Returning to community and the stone soup concepts, where everyone contributes to the pot.

### **PLEASURE SOUP**

We are here to love and accept each other radically. This is the essence of what pleasure teaches. Bring on the goosebumps. Bring on the electricity. Pleasure is to so deeply connect to your loving as to align in it. Gather, meditate, breathe in the

## PLEASURE SOUP

magic of the garden. What brings us truly alive. Stand with, show up for what gives you pleasure. What you know to be true. Dreamy soup served in concert with nature's gifts — when nourishment touches the tongue and the whole universe hums within us. Moments of full release — the soup of life, the taste of love, the reminder we are all part of one soupy mix.

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Pick from the garden, find what speaks to you, a connection, a spark. For this we've centered nasturtiums (boost immune system + energy)

Root vegetables, like sweet potato, roasting them into their sublime essence is a wonderful gateway to the pleasure centers (grounding + sustained energy)

Mint (balancing cool + refreshing reset)

Thyme (warming goodness + peppery bridge builder)

Parsley (mild clean + earthly delight)

Ground black pepper (depth + activation)

Ground cinnamon (wonder + warming spice)

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 25 nasturtium flowers and leaves
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 stick celery chopped
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 4 cups vegetable stock or chicken stock
- 1-2 sweet potatoes peeled and chopped (depending on your potato loving familia)
- 1 cup almond milk, nut (cashew) milk, or other 'milk' of choice
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/3 cup ground black pepper
- 4 shakes of ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp turmeric
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- Grated ginger
- Fresh Mint
- Thyme for the good thymes
- Parsley party

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Gather neighbors for an afternoon in the garden, urban or community and allow everyone the opportunity to bring their favorite bowl. We like to do this on
2. Have a big pot ready to go over a portable burner (or your stove) and begin a collective neighborhood pleasure soup spell casting circle.
3. Have them head into the garden to pick an herb or leaf that speaks to them. A mulberry tree has amazing leaves for making a tea or adding to a stock.
4. Once folks return to the circle with an herb they feel connected to.
5. Use the biophilic meditation, envisioning a world of care and connection at the end of this chapter
6. Discuss in circle the connective wisdom rising within each heart. Once they share have each person add their offering to the boiling water.
7. After the circle is complete. Turn down the heat and simmer until ingredients have alchemized into a delicious soup.
8. Serve in the favorite bowls brought by the group.

## **RADICAL PAIRINGS**

- Pleasure is the sticky sweet ecstasy of joining with the salt sweat of the skin kissed by the sun, being buzzed by bees, collecting the tomatoes, talking to your squash, finding the marjoram and oregano and the smells of heaven mixing with your heart.

## **♥ TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSING**

"Casa quantu stai e turrinu quantu viri." *Home for as long as you need to be, and land as far as the eye can see.* Our connection to the lands we love, our senses of belonging and contentment from what grows and flourishes, derived from one's surroundings, which can encompass the care and work of our gardens bring neighborhoods alive to each other, connected to all that is.

## **SOUP CEREMONY**

Rituals bring us inter-connection. Allowing us to thrive.

Gather your nearest and dearest witches, or witch-adjacent friends for a summer ceremony to celebrate life and love with a Pleasure Soup sunny afternoon.

## PLEASURE SOUP

Begin with meditation and safe connection to the land, plants, harvest. Let the world unfold in its natural rhythms, love flowing, everything in bloom. Listening to the earth reminds us that every herb, plant, and tree is alive and in communication with us. Each participant picks an herb from the silver herb bowl, or if there is a garden, allow five minutes for folks to go into the garden and harvest what speaks to them. A tiny plant connection time. They come back to the circle to each shares what they picked and why it brings them joy, or what moved them. As the circle closes, and what's learned is added to the wisdom pot. The heat becomes the fire of self-realization. Magnificent, joyful, loving, playful, and perfectly human. Enjoy the many pleasures of sharing in a soup circle. The call of our ancestors — strong, clear, and powerful - demands we celebrate the beauty of earth's miracles.

One spring equinox, The Yentas met for a spiritual reset at the Self-Realization Fellowship Lake Shrine in Pacific Palisades. The grounds hold some of Gandhi's ashes and all the mysteries of spirit. Founded by Paramahansa Yogananda, the garden grounds surround a beautiful lake continuously caressed by Pacific ocean winds, with two white swans and beautiful rose bushes that seem to always be in bloom. Admiring the roses, we wondered at the sweet lovely scent. A woman passing by answered our query, "A rose is the highest vibration, so divinely persistent — it completely changes form, giving itself over in bloom to become a lovely fragrance." Wisdom that stays with me. Rose frequency is 320 MHz compared to Basil at 42 MHz. In making way for pleasure it helps to understand the frequency and harmonies of the herbs you are working with.

### **MEDITATION**

Breathe in love.  
Breathe out peace.  
Close your eyes.

Notice each breath. Take in the essential pleasures of each breath, what brings you joy, what wants to join you for ease and grace and power.

See the garden

Take in the sounds, do you hear wind in the leaves of the trees, birds chirping, delivery trucks backing up, whatever you hear allow it to flow.

Enjoy  
Wind  
Sun

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

Touch  
Smell

See the garden.  
Touch of the plant on your skin  
Plumb blossoms  
Nasturtium flowers  
The scent.  
Feel rooted and connected  
Take it in.  
The network broadcast of the ecosystems.

Worldwide, foundational, well, healed, whole  
As a symbol of hope and resilience.  
Beauty's ability to survive through adversity.  
Additionally, connect to its wisdom. Plum blossom symbolizes prosperity, fruitfulness,  
beauty, purity, and good luck.  
Go through the life cycles of the seasons,  
Bloom and blossom  
Food for  
Birds, bees, butterflies and dragonflies  
Not long after the flowers are spent, and the petals fall,  
Nourishing the land. Feeding the rees to produce plums

Five petals represent balanced energy because they symbolize the five elements of nature.

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space

Find your place  
Take a seat  
Come alive  
Open your eyes.

Breathe in peace  
Breathe out love.



# THE BASICS OF SERVING SOUP

If everything is soup, it behooves us to get comfy with the basics, to learn the numerous uses of soup.

Everything is Soup means we work with *everything* turning it into soul stirring meals.

Be empowered, to love, to nourish, to heal, to grow through the world of liquid power and purpose soup represents. If you see a good deal on meat, an abundance of greens, if your body craves something, be curious how to turn it into a meal. Don't throw away your vegetable tops and scraps, add it into the soup stock bag in the freezer or fridge depending on your soup stock making rotation timing.

SOUP is the ultimate alignment of our collective heart. When you know the way of soup, understand the energetics, establish key ingredients, take stock in who you are and what you know, and the ways flavor combines, develops, echoes —not only are you able to nourish yourself, family and community — you have achieved harmony. Imagine exploring the tapestry of thyme and all the magical herbal intersections in every delightful combination from the highest altitude, smelling the flowers of the alps alchemy, to your eight year old could do it.

Soup is a prolific teacher because it is an approach to nourishing our bodies optimal functions at the foundational level.

The rich traditions of soup are accessible to everyone, every culture, sustaining the wisdom of our ancestors, grandmothers and ancient earth wellness traditions

The way of soup is a methodology developed over time eternal. Keep it simple.



# FOUNDATIONAL SOUP MAKING

BIT BY BIT putting things into the pot to cook, to stir, make magic. Any soup. Any time. Let's go. We offer these knowing you can't go wrong. Soup is process, just make it. We like to turn on Showtunes and get down to chopping, cooking, singing, tap dancing, casting spells, prayers. What makes a nourishing soup is not how fancy it is or how difficult and complicated the preparations are, but how satisfying your service is.

As a young girl, my Dad taught me the fundamentals. A good soup is in harmony with the love brought into the cooking. What is most alive comes to life, the ingredient energetics in a pot grow to complement each other and join together. The alchemy of brewing and simmering becomes the balance that brings nourishment. There are many ways to present soup. We eat with our eyes, so chunky, pureed, broth-y, find foods ways that look appetizing and pretty.

## START BY SAUTÉING AROMATICS

In a cast iron pan with fat drippings, heat 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, lard, bacon fat, whatever you got, over medium-high. Add 1 cup chopped onion or other allium (leeks, shallots, scallions), get the carrier base caramelizing.

1 tablespoon minced garlic,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup diced carrot, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup diced celery. Season with salt and cook, stirring, until onion is translucent, about 3 minutes.

## DEEPEN THE BASE

Stir in 1 teaspoon dried oregano or thyme (or 2 to 3 sprigs fresh) and/or, Sicilians like to

## FOUNDATIONAL SOUP MAKING

keep tomato paste and parmesan around for soup occasions. Use 1 tablespoon tomato paste or the Parmesan rind for flavor if this speaks to you.

Add 2 cups peeled and diced hard, starchy vegetables, like potatoes, parsnips, turnips, or squashes.

Once you grow in your soup power and purpose, you can stock up the pantry and enjoy yourself.

Pour in 8 cups chicken or vegetable broth, or water.

Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 5 minutes.

Put in 1 to 2 cups quick-cooking vegetables cut into bite-size pieces, like green beans, broccoli, zucchini, peas, and/or corn. Return to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook 5 minutes

### **ADD TEXTURE, LIFT YOUR SOUP TO THE HEAVENS**

Stir in 1 cup cooked rice, pasta, or canned chickpeas or other beans or legumes, plus 1 to 2 cups chopped leafy greens, such as spinach, arugula, kale, or Swiss chard.

### **CHOOSE YOUR BRODO**

Whether chicken, vegetable, water, umami tea, you are giving the waters power to come together through the boil. Once you are boiling turn back to the slow, infusing simmer.

### **CHOP, PREPARE, SELECT YOUR MORE DELICATE FRESH HERBS**

Parsley is a favorite of mine, but basil, chives, garlic tops, red onions, what you don't want to cook through but want to bring to the top of your soup to add another lovely dimension and taste to your soupending.

### **SERVE OR SAVE**

Ladle into bowls; drizzle with more olive oil, Parmesan, and fresh herbs. Make crostini for dipping. Crusty bread is like a blanket on a chilly night.

Serve and then save leftovers.

We like to freeze soup. Once the soup is cooled enough, you can ladle into resealable plastic bags.

Freeze flat, using a cookie tray.

Stack horizontally in the freezer.



# THE WAY OF SOUP FLAVOR

Sicilians have an innate way of flavoring. The closeness of the sea is a misty blanket of wonder inviting influence from across the oceans, they know how to dance with what the tides going in and out bring to life. It is as it always was. If you feel lost in your soup making, imagine the tiniest Italian Nonna guiding you through with her time-honored wisdom, simple, heartfelt, letting the ingredients shine. Then. Hit your soup with a lot of hard and finely grated finishing Parmesan. For Sicilians cheese is the answer to all of life's questions.

"Ah, piccola Mel, cooking isn't about making things complicated—it's about love, patience, and knowing when to stop. The best meals? They nourish the soul, they care for your heart. You let the tomatoes ripen until they smell like the sun, the basil so fresh it still carries the morning dew. Olive oil used with passion. Garlic? Always fresh, never burned—burnt garlic shows a lack of respect. And the cheese, well, the cheese on the cappello. A little Pecorino for sharpness, Parmesan for depth, maybe some mozzarella if you need it soft and creamy.

Salt? Prosciutto, capers, and olives bring it naturally. Taste first, season last. And don't forget the acid! A splash of lemon wakes everything up, a drizzle of balsamic tells a story. You don't need to do too much, just enough to make every spoonful sing.

Most of all, cook with joy, with laughter, with music, with the ancestors. Most importantly use what you have, invite your familia and never eat soup alone.

The secret.  
Stir the pot.

Be one with your bowl.  
Mangia, mangia!"

If you want to learn the way, the flow, the mojo, the magic and miracles of your inner souper. It is important to learn the mix of flavors to keep your body in harmony. Soup like a good life, absolutely sings in harmony. Listen you your body, hear what your soul cries out for, and celebrate all you've learned about connection and collaborations.

## **FIVE FLAVORS**

"There is no end. There is no beginning. There is only the infinite passion of life." - Fellini

Harmony, balance, and interconnectedness are central to a Federico Fellini cinematic world. Harmony is the foundation of all things. This is true in life, in relationships, and most certainly in soup making. A dish without balance is like a life without virtue, either too bitter to swallow or too bland to be remembered. The five flavors, when in balance and harmony, nourish not just the body but also the spirit, and hit you right between the third eye like a big pizza pie.

### **Smell - Pungent (Spicy and Aromatic) – The Breath of Vitality**

*"Without movement, there is stagnation."*

Pungent foods disperse and invigorate, much like wise words that clear confusion. When the body feels heavy or sluggish, ingredients such as scallion, radish, garlic, and warming spices restore flow. A soup with a touch of pungency awakens the senses, reminding us that change is necessary for growth.

Parts of the body supported by pungency (Lungs aka the very breath of life)

### **Taste - Salty – The Wisdom of Water**

*"Water shapes the stone, not by force, but by persistence."*

Salty foods moisten, soften, and cleanse, teaching us the virtue of flexibility. A well-placed dash of miso, sea salt, or a taste of the ocean's gifts—clams, oysters, or sardines—can transform a humble broth into something profound. But as in speech, too much salt can make a soup (or a person) unbearable. Moderation is the path to wisdom.

Parts of the body supported by the sea (Kidneys)

### **Sour – The Lesson of Constraint**

*"To control excess, one must first understand its root."*

Sour foods guide the body in absorbing what is useful and letting go of what is not—like a teacher correcting an errant student. A hint of vinegar or citrus in a soup cuts through richness, just as discipline refines character. The wise cook knows that a little sourness is necessary, but too much can make even the strongest stomach uneasy.

*Parts of the body supported by sour (Liver)*

### **Bitter – The Strength in Adversity**

*"A bitter medicine cures sickness."*

The bitter flavor clears excess and removes what burdens the body, much like hardship strengthens resolve. Ingredients like lettuce, celery, and tea remind us that bitterness, when embraced, can purify. A soup with a trace of bitterness teaches us endurance, for in overcoming difficulty, we find clarity.

*Parts of the body supported by bitter (Heart)*

### **Sweet – The Virtue of Nourishment**

*"To give is to receive."* Sweetness strengthens and sustains, just as kindness builds community. In soup, the gentle sweetness of carrots, barley, and pumpkin provides comfort, reminding us of the importance of generosity. But sweetness must not be indulgence—true nourishment uplifts, not weakens.

*Parts of the body supported by sweetness (Spleen)*

### **Balancing Soup Flavor**

To create balance in the bowl is to create balance in the self. If one flavor dominates, harmony is lost. The wise cook, like the wise leader, listens, observes, and adjusts. Thus, the lesson is simple: A well-made soup is not merely a meal—it is a reflection of the Way. Now, go forth and simmer wisely. Experiment with different ingredients to create soups that are both delicious and deeply nourishing!

The wise cook listens, observes, and adjusts. The wise cook grows in wisdom and care as they share the gifts they've been given. The Sicilian soup maker knows the magic and miracles come through with a big pot and a spoon.

ALL CAN BE MADE *RIGHT IF YOU WENT TOO SPICY*

**Add Dairy/Dairy Substitute:**

Too much heat for your family members with a tender stomach you can add dairy products like milk, cream, yogurt, or sour cream to neutralize the compound, capsaicin that makes food spicy. Non-dairy alternatives like coconut milk can also be used.

**Add Acid:**

Acids like lemon or lime juice, vinegar, pomegranate or even tomato products help cut through the spiciness.

For tomato-based soups, adding more tomato products can be a good option.

**Sweeten:**

Sweetness can help balance out the spiciness. Try adding a touch of sugar, honey, or maple syrup.

Start with small additions and taste as you go to avoid making the soup too sweet.

**Thicken:**

Adding starchy ingredients like rice, pasta, or potatoes can help absorb some of the spiciness and add bulk to the soup.

If you have leftover ingredients from the original soup, you can add them back in to help dilute the spice.

**Keep Your Options Open:**

Add almond butter, or cashew butter.

Add more broth or stock to help dilute the spiciness.

Bring in a vegetable to counter the spice

Perhaps some sweetness in honey form

Serving the soup with a side of plain rice or bread can help temper the heat.

Be curious and enjoy the improve of the soup pot



# FLAVOR ENERGETICS

ITALY HAS A BEAUTIFULLY intuitive approach to food energetics deeply rooted in the ideas of seasonality and healing through whole, fresh ingredients. Foundational health and wellness creating hugs and healing in a bowl, where every spoonful has a story of care and support. While it's not always framed in terms like traditional Chinese medicine or Ayurveda, Italian food culture respects the *natural energetics* of ingredients, especially in soup, which is often made to comfort, nourish, and restore.

Italian flavor energetics in soups, combines folk wisdom, lifestyle, and wellness vibes. Longer tables of energy were the heart beat of our upbringing. Consider what your body is drawn to, what cravings you have, what sauces and pastas and allow the energies of connection to all that is guide you in your soup making.

When your soup is simmering, listen to the voices louder than the TV, and know the abundance of enough food to feed the whole block. Invite folks into your soup making experiences. Talk about things that matter. Love each other infusing harmonic energy boosters into your cooking.

Sicily's location on the Mediterranean is influenced by many cultures, including Arab, Greek, and Roman vibes.

## WARM & UPLIFTING (ENERGETIC BOOSTERS)

Used to invigorate the senses and gently warm the body, especially in cooler months.

- Garlic (aglio) – Antibacterial, immune-boosting, for gentle healing stimulation.
- Onion (cipolla) – Warming and grounding, great for digestion and circulation.

## FLAVOR ENERGETICS

- Rosemary (rosmarino) – Invigorates the spirit and clears mental fog.
- Black pepper (pepe nero) – Stimulates warmth and opens up sinuses.
- Cooling & Soothing (Balancers) Calms inflammation, cools the body, and gently detoxifies.
- Tomato (pomodoro) – Slightly cooling, hydrating, and rich in antioxidants.
- Zucchini (zucchine) – Moistening and detoxifying, supports digestion.
- Fennel (finocchio) – Sweet and soothing for the gut, gently cooling.

## NOURISHING & REBUILDING (DEEP HEALERS)

Perfect for recovery, grounding, and replenishing vital energy.

- Carrot (carota) – Sweet, earthy, and nourishing for the blood and digestion.
- Barley (orzo) – Strengthens the stomach, cools heat, and nourishes gently.
- Lentils (lenticchie) – Protein-rich and grounding, ideal for rebuilding.
- Bone broth (brodo di ossa) – Rich in minerals, deeply restorative.
- Bay Leaves - folks don't know about the bay leaf. Here's your starter.

## BRIGHTENING & CLEANSING (SPIRIT LIFTERS)

Lift the mood and offer clarity, often used as finishing touches.

- Lemon zest/juice (limone) – Cleansing, astringent, and bright.
- Parsley (prezzemolo) – Freshens breath, gently detoxifies the kidneys.
- Basil (basilico) – Aromatic, cooling, and heart-opening.
- Cilantro
- Dandelion
- Oat Straw (milk thistle)
- Red Clover - foraged herbs, wild edible plant, flowers of red clover are also edible and have a sweet taste. Used as a garnish for dishes, added to salads, or steeped to make a tea.
- Cinnamon - balancing flavors, lentil, chicken soup.

## SEASONS OF SOUP WISDOM

What we need in the summer is different than the demands of a cold blustery winter in our nourishing our needs but, I don't discriminate. Our worlds allow for working with

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

the seasons. Each season offers connection, collaboration and care to serve the needs of the season, to work with what is available and to live in gratitude.

### **Winter**

There's a chill in the air, it's a sign it's soup season.

Rich minestrone with beans, barley, and root vegetables. Heavy use of garlic, rosemary, and bone broth.

Crema di zucca (Winter Squash Soup)

### **Spring**

Light green soups with peas, asparagus, and mint. Gentle detox with lemon and fennel.

### **Summer**

Chilled soups like pappa al pomodoro or gazpacho italiano. Tomato, basil, and cucumber shine.

### **Fall**

Warming squash or lentil soups, a balance of sweet and savory herbs like sage and thyme.

Fall is the time of letting go, harvesting, celebrating and releasing into the darker days of winter where nourishment flourishes.

Some of us love celery.

Some of us love leeks

Some of us love to work with what we are given and make magic from that.

One of the greatest

Soup is constant layering.

Adding, building, coaxing,

enjoying the process of the alchemy.

May they bring you joy, may you find ingredients from your garden, a neighbors garden or a community market or whatever ingredients are available there is no judgement on ingredients, what you have is what you use. Every ingredient is an opportunity to create a loving delicious, deeply layered soup.

# SOUP TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

**Al dente** – Cooked until just firm, especially pasta or vegetables added to soup for texture.

**Allungare** – To thin out soup with a bit of broth or water, especially if it's too thick.

**Soffritto** – The holy trinity: finely chopped onion, carrot, and celery sautéed gently in olive oil.

**Tritare** – To finely chop. Whether it's garlic, herbs, or vegetables — it's all about the base.

**Rosolare** – To lightly brown or sear ingredients (like pancetta or onions) to unlock rich, savory notes.

**Stufare** – To stew or braise gently. Let those veggies slowly surrender their goodness.

**Sfumare** – To deglaze the pan with wine (usually white). Loosens browned food residue from the bottom of pan by adding liquid and scraping; often used to build a soup base. Adds that Italian kiss of acidity and depth. Allows you to gain the goods to add into the pot.

**Frullare** – Blend! Turn hearty veg into smooth, velvety loving bliss.

**Insaporire** – Mingle — simmer and give ingredients time to dance together.

**Spolverare** – Sprinkle on top. A final add of Parmigiano-Reggiano or fresh herbs right before serving.

**Brodo** – Clear, seasoned broth made by simmering meat, fish, or vegetables.

**Consommé** – Clarified, clear soup made from richly flavored stock.

**Vellutata**: A soup with a smooth, velvety texture, often made from puréed vegetables.

**Purée** – To blend food until smooth, often used in making creamy vegetable soups.

**Reduce** – To simmer a liquid until it decreases in volume and intensifies in flavor.

**Roux** – A mixture of flour and fat cooked together to thicken soups and sauces.

**Simmer** – To cook in liquid at a temperature just below boiling, perfect for slow-cooked soups.

**Sweat** – To cook vegetables over low heat in a little fat until they release their juices, often the first step in soup-making.

**Whisk** – To beat or stir with a rapid motion to mix ingredients, often to blend cream into soups smoothly.

**Con il sugo di carne** - Served in its own juices

**Crema** - Thick cream soup made of puréed vegetables creamy texture, not to cream, sometimes called Vellutata. Panna soup has the cream.

**Blanch** - To immerse in rapidly boiling water and allow to cook slightly

**Julienne** - To cut vegetables

**Degrease** - To remove fat from the surface of stews, soups, or stock. Usually cooled in the refrigerator so that fat hardens and is easily removed.

**Mince** - To chop food into very small pieces.

**Purée** - To mash foods by hand by rubbing through a sieve or food mill, or by whirling in a blender or food processor until perfectly smooth.

**Saltare:** sautéing meat or potatoes,

**Soffriggere:** is sautéing onions or vegetables. To cook and/or brown food in a small quantity of hot shortening.

**Sobollire/Simmer** - To cook in liquid just below the boiling point. The surface of the liquid should be barely moving, broken from time to time by slowly rising bubbles.

**Steep:** To let food stand in hot liquid in order to extract or to enhance flavor, like tea in hot water or poached fruit in sugar syrup.

**La Scarpetta:** Sopping Up the Sauce

**in brodo:** literally, 'in broth'

**un filo d'olio:** a 'thread of oil'. used to describe a thin stream of oil drizzled on top of a dish to finish. A technique often used for thick, bean-based soups

**Minestrone:** 'big minestra' the 'big soup', a category of mixed vegetable soups, generally very thick and hearty.

**Primo:** Refers to the first course of an everyday Italian meal, some serve soup as a primo. We serve soup as the whole meal.

**Soffritto:** A battuto of aromatic vegetables, most typically onion, carrot and celery, sautéed in oil and/or butter to bring out its flavors and used as a flavor base for countless sauces, soups and stews.

**Zuppa:** one of the words for 'soup' in Italian. It refers rustic soups which are typically meant to be eaten with bread, either for dunking



# YOU GOTTA PICKLE IN BRINE BABY. BRINE.

“IF YOU WANT to sustain life, you need to learn to pickle.”

Pickling is the purest essence of Nonna and Pap-pa wisdom. It's direct. It is, no matter what, we got it. No refrigeration, we got this. No electricity, we gonna be okay. Wandering around as a kid you'd overhear purposeful belief in the power of the pickling.

My cousin, Marcy

“I know a guy who learned to pickle and his whole life changed.”

“His whole life?”

“Oh. Yeah. Every. Single. Part of their Life. From wife to a sweet and perfect life.”

“You never want to get in between Norma Jean and her pickles. Grab your pickle and move on. Keep it moving.”

Sicilian's like a good bite. The crunch, the magic, the tart, sweet, salty, savor of the pickling items. We like a brine. A cucumber, an onion, beets, you name it, you can pickle it.

Pickling is the Italian way.

Pickling is a food preservation technique, going all the way back to ancient Mesopotamia. It would sustain folks across long travels. The fermentation process is not just delicious but good for digestion. Pickle juice is rich in electrolytes and can help combat dehydration. There's a beginning stage to pickling and if you do it right it's the kind of soup that will thrill anything you add it to. Ready to discover the joy of joyous joy. Let's create a brine and pickle an onion together. Onions are the root of all goodness. They carry, curry, collaborate, support, uplift, infuse and deliver all the flavor flavs. The hold the ground floor of base note greatness on the stairway to soul stirring enrichment. “I'm kind of a big dill” memes are everywhere. The pickling is on point as a way to survive without electricity.

## YOU GOTTA PICKLE IN BRINE BABY. BRINE.

As mentioned earlier, our reliance on pickling is so deep it goes to our immigrant parents having translated, "mango," the first and most prevalent pickled and jarred item available to North Eastern Pennsylvanians to keep for winter. They presumed mango meant pickling and went on to call everything pickled a 'mango.' A catch all for an important method of keeping food preserved for winter.

Pickled peppers were Mangoes.

Pickled cucumbers were Mangoes.

Basically, if it fit in a jar, it was mangoed.

Little talked about but oh so real, onions qualify as an herb. Onions are in the allium family along with chives, garlic, shallots, scallion, and leeks. Like my Uncle Gino used to say,

"An herb is any plant with leaves, seeds, or flowers used for flavoring, food, medicine or in a perfume."

You asked. We answered, now you know. Learn to love herbaceous onions and your life will change for the better. Let this be a gateway to get comfy with creating a brine, and soon you'll find you are pickling everything.

### ***YOU GOTTA PICKLE IN BRINE BABY. BRINE.***

A briny, aromatic embrace—both a pickle and a potion, ready to brighten soups, stews, and anything in need of a Sicilian kiss. Head to your local farm, farmers market or neighborhood co-op and grab yourself the essentials. What you wanna pickle. For this we're using onions, preferably red

### ***KEY INGREDIENTS***

Loving red onions are the key, both for their flavor and the resulting deep pink hue after sitting for a day or two. You can experiment, with yellow, white, sweet, whatever feels right. Even the Sicilian favorite, cipolla rossa di tropea, smaller with stalk.

Hot Peppers – Jalapeño (or peppers of your choice)

Fresh Thyme – Good thymes, and we all want good thymes. So, add a few sprigs of thyme for extra nurturing flavor. In a pinch, a half teaspoon of dried thyme works.

Garlic – Always, garlic. Whole cloves, as you like it, for a strong, lusty brine.

### ***INGREDIENTS***

- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup hot water

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar

To Fill the Brine:

- 4 cups thinly sliced red onions (about 3 medium)
- 1 jalapeño, halved
- 4 cloves garlic, whole
- 1-2 sprigs fresh thyme

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Sterilize the jars - Wash glass canning jars and lids in hot, soapy water, and sterilize them.
2. Prepare the onions – Slice them thinly, halving them first, then cutting into slivers. Halve the pepper.
3. Pack the jar – In a quart-sized Ball jar, layer the onions, pepper, garlic, and thyme. Press gently to settle the ingredients.
4. Make the brine – Stir the vinegar, hot water, salt, and sugar until dissolved.
5. Pour and seal – Fill the jar with the brine, leaving about ¼ inch of space at the top. Seal and refrigerate.
6. Wait – Let the flavors meld for at least 48 hours. Store in the fridge for up to a month.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

We grew up with pickling and jarring of what was called a giardiniera, a medley of colorful, seasonal vegetables preserved in a tangy vinegar brine. A verdure sottaceto ("vegetables under vinegar") is served as an antipasto to spark the appetite and call in the next course. This is the purest example of everything is soup as the vinegar preserves the edibles in its brining case of goodness, allowing for delights to continue to be celebrated long into seasons of change, coldness, bitter earth and you remain in grace with the traditions and deliciousness follows you wherever you go.

♥ Traditional Sicilian Blessing

"Essere come il prezzemolo" translates *to be like parsley*. Means to be present everywhere, an ubiquitous presence. It's often used to describe someone who is always around and seemingly always available. Be in the flow with your life and loves, allow yourself the grace of presence. Be like parsley.



# WHEN YOU'RE GOING THROUGH HELL KEEP MAKING SOUP

SHIIITEE HIIIIITTTT the fannnnns hard as the 20th century ended. Fear was sown. Lovers like me settled into a soupy wisdom. Let it be.

People who love soup want nourishment, connection and grace in soup form. When they are feeling down, when there is a chill in the air, when illness and tiredness abound, we want the soul stirring magnificence, the body healing giving liquid it craves. When it's hard out here for a pimp, we have the power to make heart satisfying soups.

Everyday soups, give everything you need.

The harder it gets. The more soup you can make. It not only makes life resilient, it serves the mind, body and spirit.

Traditions become traditions for a reason. When you think it is all over tradition reminds you to keep going. BECAUSE, things change. Allow your calendar, your process, to support you. Allow tradition to be your savior when things go sideways. I say this as a woman who has been taught to hold it together, keep it together, to keep it moving, to not get stuck with too many questions.

Focus on what is working, not on what isn't. Let the stir of the pot, bring you the joy of being.

Soup making helps us honor ourselves. It helps us work with what we have, what we are given, and our moods. It helps heal us and nourish us and lift us up when we are down.

Every month women are bleeding for the earth, for growth, for care and love. We bleed to offer life, to dynamically shift the world to be a space of alignment, love and possibilities. We cycle through the month, feeling the feelings, like the world has shifted, the atmosphere quickens, our body hammers, and shifts, our hormones move to the rhythms so ancient and so powerful the world changes, moving the tides, beating so

loudly as to feel the storms coming. We do it every month until such time as our body changes and grows into yet another super dynamic offering of divine wisdom. We move into a supra-sexual expression of our inner power. Our life, our loves, our determination, our fierceness blossoms into something else. All our lives spent in cycles of change, birth, possibilities, wholeness change into a super power of greatness.

If you talk to girls, women, those who cycle monthly, who bleed to lead their lives with grace. You know it is a takeover, something you learn to deal with. It never ends. It comes every month until it stops. Women are in constant ebb and flow. We know how to roll with change, it is our super power. We are grateful so many are waking up to the joys, and the profound wisdom of womanhood. We are grateful for the ways, the shifts, the information, the wisdom circles, the sharing continues that we may know each other more deeply, and heal together, what is our birthright, to elevate the planet and become the most magnificent expression of who we are and how we share the gifts we've been given.

All women go through the change, change, change, a change of fools. Because of this you have to know your body, listen to its calls, its needs, its desires. We grow through the worst of the worst bodily expressions, and just when you think it's all over, you have nothing to give, you are deemed invisible, hurting, left like road kill on the side of the road. May this be your wake up call to expect more. To call in support, to speak up, to talk about and share around the power in the ashes of change.

Soup is the well loved gateway to feeling better, connected and loved. Every pot of soup we make includes BAY LEAVES. We have a bay laurel tree in the neighborhood and we harvest fresh leaves and add to everything we make. Each leaf in itself is a witches manifestation ritual.

If you are not woman identifying, it's okay. Bay leaves are an equal opportunity manifestation instrument and ingredient. We are not speaking directly to you in this chapter. It is okay to keep moving, turn the pages. Not everything is for everyone.

If this is for you. We hope this time, this push, this spark of life offers you ideas to include, indulge and expand traditions into your life, like our BAY LEAF tradition.

Bay leaves are aromatic leaves of the bay laurel tree, commonly used to flavor soups, stews, and sauces. Known for their warm, subtle flavor and are typically added whole to dishes during cooking and then removed before serving. Bay leaves aid digestion, potentially reduce inflammation and stress, and are a source of vitamins and antioxidants.

*A symbol of power and life spells, bay leaves are used for spells to find love and spells to heal perceptions. They represent secrets revealed and show that what is unspoken and still exists and calls in deeper right relationships.*

Soup making is a deep practice and ritual to survive. Whether it is your monthly cycle of power and purpose, moving through perimenopause or the fullest expression of grace and power in the third acts of life. We hope you grow your intentionality and arrive in alignment with its energy. Use every era as a powerful time of development. Schedule the

goodness to guide you through. Get served, allow support to flow through your being. Receive funds, gifts, outings, trips. Go to the chiropractor, sauna, stretching, enjoy edible gummies for sleep, get to know herb energetics and what your body craves, acupuncture, weight lifting, dance, dedicated decision making and the nutrition of fresh, body nourishing soup, with protein and willingness to rest.

Allow what is most true, most loving and wholly free to envelop your being and lift you up into the highest vibration of form and function for this lifetime.

Also, remember what you have learned to make, if you enjoy pickling, add tart pickled red onions to your lunchtime joy. What you create and jar can be a tasty soup topper, or something to stir into broth for a tangy uplift. You never know how your practice will lift your heart with the zing that makes your heart sing. Be inspired. Drizzle your vegetable brine into pasta e fagioli for a bright counterpoint to any creamy beans. Who knows what will change in your life as you keep going, keep moving, keep making soup, enjoying all of it, knowing it is temporary and new days are ahead full of the darkness and light, full of life.

Remember. No matter what.

You are loved.

We love you.

We care about you.

We hope you are immediately connected to what will most radically support you.

We hope your soup dreams will be met in the most wonderfully magnificent ways.

When You're Going Through Hell Keep Making Soup. We have another title for this soup, the recipe I'm unable to add to this book as it is still being tinkered on in the soup kitchen.

At this point it is merely a base soup, cause each of us has different needs during a certain times of trouble and trauma throughout our lives. Perhaps you get me in this, as a woman of a certain age. If you don't, we are working on a soup in progress, a *Never Gonna Give Up on Me Post Menopausal Soup*.

Pray for me.

Pray for us.

Pray for a world reborn in safety for women of all ages, freedom to express ourselves without oppression and violence.

Pray for a new way.

When hell might be an offramp, keep going. You'll love the road ahead, where bright skies and support await you.



# ALL RECIPES ARE NOT LOST

WHAT HAPPENS when a recipe is lost. A beloved dish you remember well from childhood goes missing in the passing of a sister, a grandmother, a bestie. Maybe it was thrown away, or tragically lost in a fire.

Never worry.

This is where patience, discovery and experimentation come in handy. Lean into the long tradition of cooks, chefs, mothers, fathers, lovers, grandparents, cookbooks, podcasts, food science, bioengineering, taste bud hacks, the senses, the flavor energetics, the interactions, caramelization and our ancestors. Sometimes recipes are shared orally, or through demonstrations and never made it to paper form. There are many ways a recipe is returned to its rightful spot in the kitchen, holiday, rotation.

If you have a hankering and are interested in reviving a lost recipe from childhood, or from a restaurant you went to on a trip. Perhaps it is time to get in the kitchen and follow your heart to guide your way home.

Should you get a case of the food recipe Sherlocks. A few tips, use your flavor, balance, acid, fat, focus, variety of spices and herbs, tasting and adjusting skills we've brought up in the book, and use whatever other sources to arrive where you start, a condition of loving soup-licity.

Begin with the basics of memory, use your senses to drop into the memory and the feelings of the soup.

Keep in mind...

Soup recipes improve over time, as you develop mastery, as your tastes change. It's an alchemical stone, the crucible of the bowl changes based on the heat, the seasonings, the care and work, and it is for you to know, now and forever, all receipts are not lost.

Here's a bit of a walk through *The Sound of Music* hills to resurrect a recipe or two.

### **Key ingredients vs. ingredients.**

Ingredients define the forms to complete the mixture; includes every substance used. Key ingredients are what is needed to maintain the integrity of the recipe. Ingredients lists can ebb or flow depending on what is available.

### **Quantity**

Does not necessarily need to be the main or most abundant component.  
Can be major building blocks, smaller additions, or simple seasonings.

### **Substitutions**

Replacing a key ingredient can fundamentally change the recipe. For example, a tomato in Southern Italian food or chili powder in a pot of chili.  
Other ingredients like salt, pepper, or herbs are more flexible and often can be adjusted or omitted with less impact.

### **Role in the dish**

A "supporting character" elevates the "main ingredient" or overall dish. For example, cheddar cheese adds a rich, tangy flavor to potato soup, rather than just being a protein.  
All raw materials, such as flour, eggs, and water, that are combined to create the final product.

### **Naming conventions and clarity**

It is up to you how you label your approach the excavating of the recipe.

Here are some widely accepted conventions to build a recipe, resurrecting memories:

- **Remember there are subcategories for complex dishes.** Write it all down. Voice note it. Marry your vision to the output.
- **Use ingredients in the order they flow.** This helps the recipe grow step-by-step and reduces the chance of missing an ingredient.
- **Keep in mind clear, common names.** Avoid technical or brand names (e.g., use "all-purpose flour" instead of a specific brand) unless a particular product is essential for the results.
- **Consider descriptions for preparations.** If an ingredient requires simple prep, add it to the ingredient list. For example, "1 stick butter, softened" or "1 cup sliced strawberries"





# LIVING IS SOUP

Soup is resistance. Living is soup.

If you ever wonder about the abundance of the world. Never forget, we are loved so greatly and interconnected so deeply to all living things, fruit grows on trees for us to be nourished. Don't forget your connection to all that is. Remember your biophilic inter-relational, all is one, occupation of the heart.

We are here to share our loving, to be connected to what we love and to be present to everyday ordinary miracles. We are in the worlds to hold, share, support, uplift, engage, hype up, alignment with our loving center. What we love, how we love, where we grow our soul/soil is how we live.

We are never far from the Catholicism of our childhood, its Sunday School and church experiences, our Priests, a Nun sense or three, and all the many magical laughs shared over the good Ole cracked open Testament. St. Anthony. St. Thomas. The churches of our youth.

((Be biblical, they say. Okay!))

Be antifascist (Exod. 3 old testament) *I am what I am, Moses and the Burning Bush. Shed your shoes, leave behind all you carry, humble your heart before the lord. You will lead the Israelites out of Egypt.*

((Have faith, they say. Okay!))

Faith (Mathew 17:20) *If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, move from here to there and it will move.*

"You don't need permission from the seeds to be the sun." Bret Shuford Humble yourself, shed your shoes, allow grace to flow from the earth have faith. Seeds are planted,

## LIVING IS SOUP

faith allows them to blossom. Faith in the alchemical stones of the world transform us, available fruits and vegetables feed us. Seasons come and go. Living is faith in a big soupy world to provide. Knowing what fruits are growing in your neighborhood, is there a bay leaf tree, rosemary. how about rose geranium? What's good for the planet, the butterflies, for the bees? What's the world all about? Soup connects us with the earth, each other and all our chosen families. Band together in loving our neighbors, because we are our neighbors. We all share ecosystems. These questions Italians understand deeply, this is what island folks know. Don't ask of the world, 'Are you my family?'

Treat everyone you meet as familia.

We are birthing new worlds, free from the past. Faith reminds, every moment we don't bring the past into the present moment is a miracle opening up the future to be something completely different. Life breaks the water of wombs. LIFFFFFEEEEEEEE KNOWS, Everything, EVERYTHING, is SOUP. WELCOME to the family.

What has been forgotten we now remember.

We are midwives of a renaissance of the heart.

Everything is available.

We plant seeds to grow nourishment of our soil and souls.

In this soup brings us into the bowl of the essential nature of love, our moments of being, in this and the other.

A pulse. A charge. Empathic electricity.

A bigger purpose. The heart of love, allowing all of it to be there.

Prospering backyards, land dumps, repairing lead, roundup, spilled contaminations, recycling batteries, getting out from under landfills.

Detoxing the soil.

Coming to understand the waters.

Earth is our mother, a huge primordial soup, where we come from and where we return. It is where everything comes from in cyclical, eternal patterns, encouraging worlds to be born again and again, through seasons and love of sun and dark.

Soup is earth medicine incorporating the world.

Our connection and our purpose for soup conversations is to spark care and work for healed and whole life.

A call response. Indigenous wisdom, the antidote to the poison is within six feet. The problem occurs, solutions are available in a healthy biome. It's the reciprocity, yin yang of things.

Loving offerings to the waters of our being, thrown in a pot, for harmony and balance.

Life.

# BUTTER AND FLOUR AND ROUX (A ROMANCE IN TWO PARTS)

“YOU GONNA NEED TO MAKE A ROUX.”

“Who?”

“No. A roux.”

“A roux?”

“Yes.”

“What’s that?”

“Butter meets flour. It puts heft in your soup, it is a thickener.”

“Melt butter” are two of the most fantastic words in the ‘everything is soup’ lexicon. Delicious butter, butta, but-ta-ta, is pure pleasure in every way.

The world is full of the uses, for and with, butter. We, *quite frankly, my dears*, live for it.

Making a roux is one of deep base note enrichment basics, the best of the best, as a gateway into *the way of soup*. It’s as easy as melting butter (fat) and stirring in flour, it creates alchemy, the magic and miracles of heat, pot and heart. This chemical interaction lends flavor, substance and depth of possibilities for a heartier soup. You will see the dark Madonna Goddess form in the brown butter, as the flour incorporates into brownness.

This simple cooked mixture of equal parts fat and flour, used as a thickening agent in various sauces, soups, and stews. Cooking time is determined by incorporating all flour into the fat and level of brownness. Common types include white, blonde, and brown roux, each with a different cooking time and flavor profile.

Don’t get it twisted, our definition of butter has a few kissing cousins, including lard, especially dear to the Italian way, the black sheep of the fat family— tallow, a fatty, fat. We learned early and often to ‘always use it all.’ Bacon fat, beef fat, pork fat.

A roux brings thickening agency for stew made by slow cooking. I didn’t realize the mysteries of the roux until a request came from my family to feed my Dad.

BUTTER AND FLOUR AND ROUX (A ROMANCE IN TWO PARTS)

"What is your favorite soup, I can make for you, Dad?"

My terminally ill father, who was diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer replied,

"Barley soup."

"Barley, soup?"

I'd never even considered barley soup as a soup memory.

'Huh, Okay. Ok.'

*Barley. Barley. Barley.*

Like an echo from the ethers of memory transporting me back to his Mother's kitchen.

*Wait. Wait. Wait.*

Okay. On it.

Some soups are so a part of your DNA, served in formative years of your development as to spawn, from a seed of memory, a return home, across time and space, blossoming out of you with the tiniest inquiry, the conditions cultivating, a glint of sunshine sparkling, zucchini growing on the vine, a smile of a perfect carrot pulled from the earth, the glimmer of a potato or snap and sweet peas.

We were served what we then crave later in life in times of turmoil and trouble. The comfort. The connection. The care. Hopefully the healing.

Vague memories of barley soup, hazy to me, and yet, familiar. Grains in a ball jar. It wasn't in our kitchen rotation as my Mom, most likely, wasn't a fan of barley, so it wasn't served. Who knows.

Barley part of the pantry of staples, like giant dried lima beans, or lentils, ancient grains, all available to be used to cook meal after meal, year over year.

Barley is the versatile heart of hearty Italian soups it subs for pasta, beans and vegetables, and everything nice, AND, in my Dad's case he told me he loved a barley addition to a classic, 'mama gonna knock you out with love' soup.

For this dear request, in this moment of soup making. It was so nurturing to fall on my knowledge of roux, which thickens the Grateful for you, you glorious roux, to hold it all and bring through the grace of joy, nourishment and power of the ancestors to flow and grow.

As my Grandmother would say before dinner,

"Today's a new day, let the sun shine in. Be grateful for all the blessings we are about to receive, and thank you for the family we rely on for ease."

We do what we can to nourish those we love, and it is with this I went about the heart-felt return to the soup pot brew to make a stew. But, sometimes the questions, followed by cooking is to nourish the part of us connected to all that is, the joy, the senses, the memories thriving over a boiling brew of trouble and stew.

All things are made manifest through the beating heart, out through our hands. Our hands are the servants of the heart. As you grow as a soup maker, you find mastery in

allowing your hands to dance with the wishes of the heart. In soup making the spell is set on the intentions of the heart.

### **MAMA GONNA KNOCK YOU OUT WITH LOVE BARLEY SOUP**

I dug a bit and found a barley soup recipe in the handwritten recipe box found in the garage and somehow miraculously kept. This isn't necessarily a Sicilian soup. My dad liked barley, like one of his dad's brothers. It was necessary to look at several recipes for barley soup to understand the flavor profile. A simple request from the death bed of my Father, a last wishes meal. BTW. F\*ck Cancer. Hopefully Roux will be a part of your problem solving repertoire, to add a bit more depth of flavor for all your come to Jesus moments when the heart and hands need to reconnect to all time is now.

### **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Lots of love and gratitude

Time honored tradition of inviting spirits of the ancestors in times of transition and support

### **KEY INGREDIENTS**

Barley (cooling + drain fluid and heat from the body)

Bay leaf (digestive stimulant)

Coriander (calm + uplifting)

### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1 medium, diced onion
- 1 zucchini cut into same size cubes
- Fresh coriander / cilantro – optional for garnish (chopped)
- 3-4 small bay leaves
- ½ tsp favorite herbs
- 2 tbsp Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 ½ tsp iodized Sea Salt
- 1 can 15.5 oz. Cannellini beans drained and rinsed (or any small beans)
- 1 large can 28 oz. organic crushed tomatoes
- ½ cup organic tomato puree (optional)
- ¼ cup raw organic Barley (makes 1 cup cooked)

## BUTTER AND FLOUR AND ROUX (A ROMANCE IN TWO PARTS)

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Warm a large pot. Add the extra virgin olive oil. Add the onion and sauté for 2-3 minutes or till onions are translucent. If you are using zucchini add to the pan to brown.
2. Add seasonings, salt and pepper
3. Add crushed tomatoes, puree and 28-30 oz. water.
4. Add Italian seasonings, bay leaves and salt. Stir, cover and let it simmer for 30-40 minutes.
5. Cook the Barley side by side by Sondheim. It will be ready to add to the soup by the time the soup has simmered lovingly. Wash and rinse the barley a couple of times. Put 3 times water in a deep pan, add the barley. Once the water boils, put a lid and simmer for 35-45 minutes till the grain is completely cooked. Drain away the remaining water if any is left.
6. Add 1 cup cooked Barley and Cannellini beans
7. Simmer for another 10 minutes. Remove the bay leaves.
8. Do a taste test for additional salt, spice, etc. You could even add a wee bit of sugar if you think it's too sour.
9. Garnish with freshly chopped Coriander.

### **SOUPER TIPS**

The healing comes from complex carbs, it is an excellent vegetarian source of protein and fiber. Barley can be a great substitute for certain pastas. Not everyone loves the taste of Barley but, if you do. It makes the soup heartier, filling and more nutritious. Ask what are preferred vegetables, can use carrots or leeks or conversely, pancetta can be used to bring a smokier flavor.

### **USES OF ROUX IN SICILIAN COOKING**

Traditional Sicilian cooking loves fresh ingredients and techniques like slow simmering and sautéing with olive oil to build flavor. Our family likes to use a butter roux in these circumstances:

- As a thickening agent
- When that certain butter richness is required
- In our stews, when loved ones make requests

# DREAMIN IN SOUP

MAYBE YOU DROP into a deep theta sleep, that tender place between waking and dreaming, where the mind stops managing and starts listening. In this space, dreams of soup may dance across your consciousness. Carrots float like planets. Onions open in translucent rings. A broth hums with memories. If this happens, you are not losing focus, you are falling for the joys of soup.

This is the dream kitchen.

Here, the unconscious comes forward to assist. The body remembers what the mind forgot. Ancestors step in. Recipes you never learned arrive fully formed. A hand you recognize but cannot name adjusts the heat. Someone whispers, *just a little more time*.

Soup dreaming is not random. It is information moving without language. It is the nervous system softening into trust. When we allow ourselves to drift while something nourishing is being made, we enter a collaboration with intelligence older than thought. The pot becomes a portal. The stove becomes a hearth for intuition.

In these dreams, you may revisit kitchens long gone, a Nonna's stove, a childhood table, a community potluck under string lights. You may taste something you've never eaten before yet somehow know exactly how to make. You may wake with the certainty healing is already underway.

## SOME DREAMY MEANINGS OF SOUP

1. To see soup in a dream symbolizes abundance, good news and unexpected good events.

## DREAMIN IN SOUP

2. To dream that you have soup indicates that you will hear news from one of your close friends about monetary issue.
3. To make soup in your dream means that a person will pay debt to you after a long time and you will have this money.
4. To see of a cooking soup in your dream suggests that you will take money from a person whom you see close to you for any reason. However, this money will not stay with you, it will go from your hands.
5. Eating soup in your dream may represent that you are in the period of abundance and you should make use of the time well.
6. To see a bowl of soup denotes you will buy a property or an expensive gift will come to you.
7. To see soup in saucepans in your dream means you will get rid of your difficult time easily thanks to your savings and planning for the future.
8. Hot soup in your dream means your profit will increase by means of your works and your financial problems will finish. If you see cold soup, this dream is telling you that the disagreements within your family will finish and everything will be all right.

Inner reality creates outer form. Go deeper through your practice of soup making. Look within before you accept anything, look within for authenticity and alignment.

Love works miracles.

Putting love in action is the end and beginning of every story.

Connect within.

Everything we've learned comes from an unending chain of joy, sorrow, history, experiences, on the shoulders of our ancestors, from the land, of our grace.

Allow your dreams to be fulfilled.

To guide you.

To thrill you.

To heal you.

My memories from childhood begin in the kitchen, watching my grandmother, my mother, my aunts prepare dishes from their childhoods. We learned tradition matters, ritual is important, the necessary care and work of transforming soil into farm, garden, plant, herb, trees, brought us delicious meals. This is the activism of remembrance, of connection, of the collective heart. In sharing we break through the cult oppressing culture and we nourish our souls, igniting light and our inner power.

May you deeply connect to source, aligned in authentic expression, fully nourished by every bowl of soup you make.

Dreams are the wishes our heart makes. Allow the pot vessel to guide you home.

# LOVING IS SOUP

As we slow down and sit around the dining room table, every spoonful of love carries us back home.

Soup love is establishing tasty techniques for delicious soup or in Italian, “Tecniche Gustose per una Zuppa Deliziosa.”

This is when the full moon hits you straight in the heart. Where you realize this is what life’s about. Don’t question it, get in your loving. Loving is easy to process, love expands naturally without reserve. It’s not just a thing your grandmother asks,

“What is the secret ingredient?”

And you pause, stumped and she laughs.

“The secret ingredient is always love.”

Take a moment for prayers, to say grace for all the blessings we’ve received as you collect your ingredients, clean your vegetables, remember chopping is a meditation, a time to think about who and what we are serving and what we are doing. Planning the meal is loving. Gathering ingredients is love, chopping and measuring is love, using an alchemical stone is loving, making more, so you can invite more people to the table, from the individual to the collective, transforming what was separate into what is connected, stronger, more nourishing.

Divine love and wisdom flows around us every day. It is in our presence, our sharing what we know, our telling stories of, as my friend likes to say, “what has had happened.” So much happens during the days labors of our lives. We find ourselves again in a bowl of soup. The tenderness of that first spoonful, the smell permeating the house, the taste buds

at attention, senses being soothed by the perfect aromatics, a joyful dance of engagement with our systems as we are nourished deep in our bellies.

If we've learned nothing. There is this. "Gardening is the cornerstone of civilization, cause if you can't feed yourself, you can't *free* yourself." From South Central brother, Ron Finley, known as the gangster gardener. To feel the freedom of our earth, where food grows on trees. You don't need to go to the grocery store, because god has made so much wonder, food grows on trees.

Take a moment to grow your loving connection to the soil, the lands on which you stand. There is much work to do. More love to be had, more joy to claim. Make a big pot of soup, invite folks over, talk about things that matter as you cultivate the conditions for all our ecosystems to thrive.

## RETURN TO THE LOVING SOUP POT

Remember soup making is ritual, a rite of passage and potent spell casting. Every time you boil water and add herbs, ingredients you are creating a brew. Each ingredient has an energetic, you allow its intention to flow, transforming through you, healing what aches, loving what needs love, nourishing the body in places craving nourishment, easing us through grief, celebrating harvests, all of it casting a spell.

Here's a soup ritual to use your favorite wooden spoon to stir ancient wisdom. This is part of our grimoire, our book of spells, we hope it inspires you to build your own. Experimentation is part of our soup and tea miracle making. The right and powerful uses of the loving soup pot. It is our way of loving each other and our community in ceremony.

### WOODEN SPOON PORTAL RITUAL

*Grab your favorite wooden spoon for summoning abundance, magic and miracles.*

1. **Prepare the threshold** this is your altar, the space, place to add your ingredients for what will become the recipe to add to your pot. This is the sacred place to call in the ancestors for support.
2. **Take out your grimoire.** Recipes become your spell book, as your experiments take form. Place your most loving soup pot on your favorite stovetop burner, like a sacred hearth. Prepare your vessel, clear it, have it be clean, empty, and waiting to receive. We have a pot handed down from the 1950's, when we enter the cosmos of soup spell casting.
3. **Let the Waters Flow.** Pour in your filtered water, fill the pot, calling in clarity, for insight, for ease.

4. **Call the Pot Out by Name** Take a few breaths. *Breathe in peace. Breathe out love.* Whisper, "*Calderone, keeper of meals, bring me grace.*" Words have power, and speaking aloud lets the pot know it is time to work, not just to cook, but to transform, to guide, to enliven and to nourish dreams fulfilled.
5. **Offer the First Gift** After prayerfulness. Drop in your first ingredient—often an onion, garlic, or a single bay leaf. Think of the person or purpose for which you are cooking. This *signals the portal to activate*: the moment where intention meets matter. Keep adding to the pot until you feel in your bones the spell is cast.
6. **Stir into a clockwise Spiral** feel the earth's rotation, call in the sunlight and its consistency, its inner power, its innate ability to shine brightly. Hold the wooden spoon in your dominant hand, as you stir call in what you want (love, healing, joy). Stir counterclockwise to release what you no longer need (fear, grief, bitterness). Let the motion be slow and deliberate. Note: if you want, you can use your non-dominant hand to break patterns, to open new doors, free from the confines of limitation.
7. **Invite the Ancestors** close your eyes for a breath and imagine every cook who has ever stirred a pot before you—all your family, your friends, unknown hands across centuries. Picture them gathered around you encouraging you, adding their invisible ingredients: patience, courage, laughter, abundance.
8. **Seal with Steam** When the first whispers of steam rises, lean in. Inhale deeply. These are the precious moments the portal opens, alchemy is at play, aromas curling like bridges between worlds. Say, "*May what we give be enough. May what we receive be plenty. May we be supported, loved, and free to enjoy loving ourselves and our communities.*"
9. **Feed the Living, Honor Rest and Relaxation** Serve the soup to those who hunger for comfort and alignment. Save a ladleful in a jar for tomorrow's meal, so the pot is never truly empty. Its story never ends.

Divining with your soup pot is as simple as opening your book of spells, summoning the ancestors, angels, helpful spirits, and casting love into your boiling water, summoning ingredients to dance at critical mass to invoke your offerings. As you practice, your mastery grows, the loving pot becomes a guide. The wisdom is never lost, it grows as you go. Loving action in a process as old as time.



# EVERYTHING IS SOUP, FOR REAL

“IS PUDDING SOUP?”

“Yes, yes. It is. Everything is soup.”

We live in a watery world, seen and unseen. Soup is what we return to as the liquid of life. It's logic for those, like myself, who enjoy whimsical wit and wisdom. I like to know both a lot about a little, or a little about a lot.

Hence and thereto. For me, and perhaps for you soup joy provides, and like the Dude scene from *The Big Lebowski*, it abides.

Everything is soup has emerged as an antidote for what the world needs now. Soup making, soup kitchen work, soup experiments healing in an all systems loving way of being in the world. The ease and power of the pot connecting with good local ingredients, plus water and fire. Everything is soup builds mastery with available elements to make something wonderfully delicious. All problems, ideas, inspirations flow into soupy existence as a potion of grace made manifest in the alchemical process of nourishing the soul. Bowls of nourishment best served full and often.

Soup is the liquid gold of life, the perfect passion play for anything that ails you. Don't worry if you go off track, return to soup basics, grounding you into your deepest sense of loving yourself, your work, your neighbors and your community.

Whether it's the first serving or the last. Whether it is mild, spicy or cold and luscious, it is essential to a life well lived. Cook with love. Season with grace. Add spice when needed. Integrate, going beyond the point of no return, turning the heat up and allow transformation to flourish into something deeper something gracious, something loving as we wind on down the road carrying soup traditions into new ways and beautiful days.

# BIG SOUP POT ENERGY

## IDEAS FOR A DELICIOUS LIFE

THINGS my funny Italian Uncles would laugh about as their Mom cooked in the kitchen.

1. My Soup Pot's so big ... it serves the whole neighborhood
2. My Soup Pot's so big... it has an agent, lawyer, manager and personal chef
3. My Soup Pot's so big... it serves joy, all by itself
4. My Soup Pot's so big ... it hosts steamy telenovela nights where secrets are spilled and life is lush
5. My Soup Pot's so big.... It makes a tasty mix of Love, Laughter, and Life's Little Miracles, so the word grows in peace and prosperity
6. My Soup Pot's so big... it ministers confessions (and give's out Hail Mary's)
7. My Soup Pot's so big... it gets you to stir the pot, kiss the ring, pass the bread, and serve your neighbors love in a bowl

What traditions, sayings, stories, tears and love flow from your family soups. Invite folks over, make a big pot and serve on Saturday afternoon, perhaps, a meet the neighbors offering. No matter the idea, the gathering, it is meant to CONNECT and nourish your community.

There are moments you turn a corner in Palermo and hear the faint sounds of a musical block party where the families of the neighborhood, musicians set up twinkling lights in the night air.

Soup making has a soundtrack. Enjoy the soothing love of the mandolin, calling you to join in the soup is life circle where joy stands in the breach, to dance, to grow and sing.

## EVERYTHING IS SOUP

To my great surprise through the many muses and musings of biophilia, so much art has been created. Never would have thought an Everything is Soup musical might come through but deeply grateful for our community choir The Band of Singers for allowing a workshop of the sounds of SOUP! Love always finds a way to express itself. Nature lovers from the beginning of time have inspired large and small meals, capturing the grand magnificence, taste, nourishment and joy of the worlds we inhabit. We, as soup community, are resilient, we are humble servants to our ingredients. We celebrate the sound of the lands we love, the folks in it, the animals, plants and support that guide us through this well loved life. We cherish song and soup, big bowls of delicious joy shared across dimensions of time, art and the seasons of life.





# TURN OF THE CENTURIES

1999, brought hope for a new century, one brimming with connection. A resurgence of the hippie “LOVE” heart movement of the 60’s plugging back into the electricity of loving everyone. A into new way for peace and love, voices lifting in harmony, and the righteousness of true connection, grounded in a bedrock of faith in the future. We trusted divine grace, love, and collective wisdom would grow shared investments in public and civic spaces for the new century.

We imagined walkable cities, parks where people met and enjoyed each other’s company, connecting with ease, gorgeous public transportation moving folks around with grace and ease, all of us flowing together, enjoying the fruits of 250 years of our labor.

Wow. Folks chose to go in a different direction. We are where we are.

The first quarter of the 21st century led many in the US astray. Away from connection and collaboration into post covid continuing isolation, growing depressions and ill health. A death grip to capitalism, cozying up to industrial technocracy, more and more disruption extraction fueled by greed for rare earth minerals, fever pitched control, greed and war. A few want everything while the majority scrambled for scraps of a disappearing pie. The rise of the billionaires, private equity and media manipulation choked off everyone.

As women led movements grow — demanding fair pay, childcare, shared labor, just fair treatment, an end to violence against woman — constriction for a certain brand of men contracted into puffed up ego driven, hurt, peacocks. Yes. Men in large numbers despise women, it is showcased in their leadership and every economic and social system including rights, healthcare, childcare, technology, media and all that jazz. A small group doubled down on every lie of exceptionalism, played up every fear, and sailed through the shadows holding up biased systems where survival means winning the lottery against

piles of debt and servitude, where the privileged lock up assets and the rest are left to suffer, struggle, die, and labor under extreme junk fees and endless subscription 'models.'

BS poured from terrible actors and bad manners grew roots, coinciding with the ease of 'disrupting' systems, controlling policy, money funding efforts with tech advancements to placate a few all while exploiting folks innate loving nature turning addiction and attraction to abusers into profit centers. All stripping away consent, bodies trafficked, humanity diminished.

"Oh, he's the priest — his attentions are good," they said, while folks were raped by those unpunished priests.

"Oh, he's the boss — we just have to put up with it," they said, while cruelty and coercion grossed out workplaces.

Rivers were sold. "Sure."

The earth was poisoned. "Okay."

Markets manipulated. "Yay."

Pensions gambled away for yachts and ego trips. "Woohoo."

*Everything Is Soup* is an intercession, a call for soul-nourishing connection. A great turning toward peace. No f-ing way. No more. Not today. ENOUGH.

Everything is Soup reminds no matter what happens, we are here to love and care for each other. We are love in action, writing new stories, honoring the waters of our being. It's the power of building community — of knowing our neighbors, of rediscovering our truest home, our joys, and our intergenerational wisdom. It's refusing disconnection and the numbing haze of tech dissociation.

We are part of a land-back movement, returning to natural order, organizing around deep, abundant rhythms. To know and be known. To see and be seen. To share our gifts.

Shifting our perceptions, allowing love to blossom is where freedom begins.

To those who came before us, and to those who come after, our children's children:

We demand a just, thriving, biophilic world.

A world that honors our lands and each other in peace and harmony.

Where art thrives, stories heal, and wonder is the way of soup.

May your connection to community grow and flourish.

May nourishment and abundance flow throughout our neighborhoods.

May faith deepen in what is wonderful, within and without.

May your ancestors feel honored by how we practice and process all the love there ever was — or ever will be.

A common Sicilian toast is "Saluti" — *to your health*.

Here's to you, to love, and to the soup life.

SALUTI!





# LOVE ACTIVISM

WHAT HAPPENS in the Kitchen saves the world. Growing up in the farmlands of eastern Pennsylvania we were never more than five blocks from farms with chickens, cows, joy and corn fields of dreams. We were surrounded by dairy farms, rich fertile lands tended by community farmers. *Always use it all* was our Grandmother's credo. Nothing goes to waste.

You admire something and say "Hey, this is awesome I want that so you go and do that."

Leave the bad attitude, enjoy the Soup. Eat locally and sustainably.

Again, food grows on trees. Share your abundance. Gather to make jam with excess fruit harvests throughout the seasons. Work your soil. Grow your soul as you enrich the biodiversity and ecosystems of our land and neighborhoods. Learn where your food comes from and how it is produced. Seek out a diverse variety of vegetables and fruits from small, local producers who take care of the land. Buy eggs, meat, and fish from producers whose practices are organic, humane, and environmentally sound.

Eat seasonally. Eat what is fresh and most alive.

Choose food in season. Even where the growing season is short, organic gardening and farming can extend it: greens can be grown in cold frames and greenhouses, and there are always local foods that can be stored, dried, and canned for the winter months. Eating seasonally inspires your menus, gives you a sense of time and place, and rewards you with the most flavorful food.

Shop at farmers' markets.

Farmers markets create communities that value diversity, honesty, seasonality, locality, sustainability, and beauty. Get to know the people who grow your food. Think of yourself as a partner with the farmers, learning from them and working with them.

Plant a garden.

It is deeply satisfying to eat food you have grown yourself, in your own backyard or in a community garden. Even a pot of herbs on your windowsill can transform your cooking and connect you to the changing seasons, as can foraging for wild foods and harvesting fruit from farms that allow you to pick your own. Learn what the edible landscape has to offer.

Conserve, compost, and regenerate, reuse and repair what is in need of repair.

Take your own basket to the market. Reuse whatever packaging you can.

Keep a compost bucket nearby when you cook to recycle kitchen scraps. The more you conserve, the less you waste, the better you feel.

## TAKE LOVING ACTION

We love to serve soup to folks who are in need of nourishment. It is in our acts of kindness flowing from our heart the world bends toward justice. This is the deeper and more meaningful experience of our lives in connection with all that is.

It starts with you and me when we decide to make soup.

1. Find a local food kitchen and deliver nutritious containers of soup.
2. Bring soup to a neighbor recovering from surgery, illness or overwhelm.
3. Host a community care night 'Soup Swap' night where everyone brings a container of soup.
4. Create 'Soup is Life in a Jar' assembling ingredients and instructions for a delicious soup in a Ball jar as a thoughtful gift.
5. Bring in the 'sisterhood' of your neighborhood for a 'Toddler Soup Gather', share tips that are good for the health, imagination and well being of our children.
6. Support local farmers. Make soups from whatever grows on trees. Create connection to earth's magic.
7. Volunteer with an organization like Food Not Bombs and feed the hungry.
8. Keep making soup. Soup making teaches abundant systemic theory to improve the quality of collaborative relationships.
9. Stand up. We're storytellers. Push back on BS, Grow in your practices of creative, non-violent, non-cooperation with state violence against women.

Do human beings have within them an innate sense of connection to other forms of life? If so, can this natural feeling, this "*biophilia*," both enhance our respect for ourselves as human and reinforce our sense of obligation to treat other forms of life with loving care?

—T. H. Watkins



Calendula

The glen



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work. Grateful for the gather ye as ye may annual tradition with Madame La Tam, Claire Dawidziak and Amy Storck. Thanks Melissa Fitzgerald for providing the pathway to my beautiful GADA family, and our patron saint, Phoebe Tahiti, Shannon McMahan and Rich Lichte, turning roommates into family and teaching me about MEL POWER. May former board members, Gretchen Louise Picklebottom and Felici continue to ferry folks across the Elysian fields into the Lumarian sea with grace, wisdom and wild abundance.

The first movie I developed, started over 30 years ago. *Swingers*, written by Jon Favreau and directed by Doug Liman. It was a home movie of our beginnings in the worlds of entertainment. A ragtag crew of actors, artists, comedians, agents, musicians, casting directors, music supervisors, and executives, all trying to break through, survive, and make it in Hollywood. Connecting vibrationally with the charm and swagger of the original Rat Pack, Favreau's revival of a new rat pack hit all the right notes. Now, with this dig into my ancestral Sicilian soup swagger it feels like a return to honoring traditions of respect, integrity and loving joy.

For research purposes we let the home movie approach continue, with field testing, song writing, experimental filming, farm wisdom, herbal witches garden plantings and community harvest schedules to cultivate the conditions for this souper work. It's beautiful to witness the connections across our urban gardens. The wisdom and knowledge of our collective village shared through storytelling, singing, Pickin' Kitchens throughout the seasons, skill shares, stories and recipes passed down through oral tradition, demonstration, trial and error, working with the plants, herbs, infusions, and the extensive research time, exploring collections, biodiversity libraries, encouraging Sicilian feasts, in between digital archive searches have yielded this work. We have co-created so many delicious connections through our short lived but powerful community apothecary, and singing the songs in the name of biophilia under the Hollywood sign.

Grateful for research collections and those who tend them for supporting botanical soup history, art and ecology. **Biodiversity Heritage Library (BHL):** Dedicated to biodiversity literature and archives. Their collection comprises over 150,000 illustrations from journals and libraries worldwide, dating back to the 15th century. **New York Public Library:** Offers over 180,000 public domain items in their Digital Collections. One of our favorite literary systems in the world, known for their care, expansive collections and representative of the world **Smithsonian Open Access:** Provides access to millions of public domain images from across the Smithsonian's museums, research centers, libraries, archives, and the National Zoo, which can be downloaded, shared, and reused without requesting permission. **The New York Botanical Garden:** The Mertz Library has a long-standing digitization program and has contributed over 4 million images to various online repositories. They also house the Institute of Economic Botany collections, which are being digitized and made available online. The work continues.





# RECIPES + TERMS

## RECIPES

Brine, Baby, Brine

Can't We All Just Have Asparagus Soup

Cranky, Crabby, Come As You Are Soup

Freed From The Grip of the Popo Soup

Gardening As Resistance Soup

I Gotta Gal Potato Leek Soup

I Will Always Love You Pasta e Fagioli

Let's Conclude Our Business Witches Solstice Lentil Soup

Looking For Love In All The Right Places Soup

Nonna's Always Right Italian Wedding Soup

Pleasure Soup

Sicilians Heal With Love Chicken Soup

Stew for Stu

Taking Stock In What We Are, And What We Are Not

That's Amore, Asparagus Soup

The Godmothers of the Garden Soup

The Sun is Shining All Over The Place Tomato Soup

You Got What I Need Magic Stone Soup

'We've Got Beef' Spicy Mushroom Soup

Whatta Ya Got Soup

Zuppa Di Primavera With a Zucchini Kicker

## SOUP COOKING TECHNIQUES

Al dente

Blanch

Boil

Brown

Deglaze

Degrease

Dice

Frullare

Giardiniera - medley of colorful, seasonal vegetables, including peppers, preserved in a tangy vinegar brine

Insaporire

Julienne

Marinate

Mince

Puree

Reduce

Roast

Rosolare

Roux

Saute

Sauté the aromatics

Scamorza/Scamutz (made from mozzarella curd, romano and a few other things) super stretchy, translation "beheaded"

Season to taste

Simmer

Spolverare

Steep

Stir

Stufare

Tritare

Vellutate - mother sauce (velvety love)

Verdure sottaceto - vegetables under vinegar

Whisk

## **TOOLS/EQUIPMENT**

Alchemical Stone  
Cast Iron Pan  
Cutting board  
Dutch oven  
Freezer-safe bags  
Stock Freezing Hunk  
Glass containers/ball jars  
Immersion blender  
Knife  
Ladle  
Calderone/Large pot/Kettle/Pottage  
Rolling pin  
Sieve  
Soup pot  
Wooden spoon  
Work surface

## **FLAVOR ENERGETICS**

Brightening  
Cleansing  
Comforting  
Cooling  
Detoxifying  
Elemental grounding  
Heart-opening  
Healing  
Invigorating  
Joyful  
Rebuilding  
Rooted  
Soothing  
Spicy  
Uplifting  
Warm

## THEMES

Abundance  
Anarchist kitchen  
Celebration  
Community care  
Divine love and wisdom  
Enough for all  
Family folklore  
Immigrants get the job done  
Italian Girls Night Out (IGNO)  
Long open tables  
Magical realism  
Nonna wisdom  
Radical kindness  
Resilience through food  
Sicilian ancestral healing  
Community building  
Traditional Sicilian blessings  
Whimsy + wildflowers

## 🍷 TRADITIONAL SICILIAN BLESSINGS

*"A tavola non si invecchia" - you don't get old at the table. With good company and good food, time doesn't pass*

*"Bacioni a tutti" - big kisses to everyone*

*"Buon Appetito, Tutti a Tavola." Everyone to the table. Enjoy your meal*

*"Conzala comu vuoi, sempri cucuzza è" - Season as you like, but, it is always zucchini, implies things are what they are, even if presented in a more appealing way*

*"Dio ti benedica" - God bless you*

*"Mangiarsi il fegato" - to eat your liver, meaning to be consumed by anger*

*"Mangiare con gli occhi" - means to devour with one's eyes*

*"Oggi in figura, domani in sepoltura" - today in person tomorrow in a grave. Is a darker way to resist*

*"La speranza e l'ultima a morire" - death will find me alive*

*"Quel ch'è fatto, fatto" - What's done is done*

*"You're Dead to me" - You are Dead to Me*

## TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

Amo - love  
Amore - loved  
Angelo - angel  
Bella - beautiful  
Capo - boss  
Caro - dear  
Dolcezzo - sweetness  
Fagiolo/a - bean  
Fatina - fairy  
Fiorellino/a - little flowers  
Fratello - bro  
Furfante - scoundrel  
Gioja - joy  
Jabroni - a foolish person or contemptible person  
Leoncino/a - little lion  
Minchia / express gratitude, joy, anger, worry, fear  
Pazzo / Pazza - crazy  
Piccolo/Piccola - little one  
Polpetto/a - meatball  
Polpettino/a - little meatball  
Puppeto - puppet  
Puzzone - stinker  
Rompiscatole - pain in the neck  
Stella - star  
Stuggots - an irritating person  
Tesoruccio - little treasure  
Tigrotto/a - little tiger



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Melanie Lutz is a love activist, storyteller, soup maker, joyful kitchen witch and love activist. Raised on tomato-stained aprons, wooden spoons and whispered family myths, she's spent years creating spaces and media to nourish body, mind, and community.

Everything is Soup is her first cookbook-memoir—a simmering invitation to live deliciously and love deeply.

Melanie asks questions to shift perceptions, gently unraveling myth, contradictions, blindspots and hidden (to the invisible eye) truths about love in all its forms. She creates stories for a more loving, insightful, powerfully connected world. From unexpected encounters to everyday acts of kindness, she loves what guides us through the absurd, the tender, and the transformational. She lives and writes in Los Angeles, California working in the name of biophilia.



# INSPIRATION AND IDEAS ARE REALIZED IN A VESSEL

FOLKS HAVE BEEN MAKING soup and serving others long before I was born and will continue long after my wooden stirring spoon and ladle are removed from my cold dead hands.

Ideas have consciousness. They are looking to come through in physical form. Your pot, kettle, or cauldron vessel, is one way to manifest these ideas into the magic and miracles of connection, opening up to possibilities.

Ideas seem to form from the ethers, but we know it is through intention, heat, work, attention and commitment they come to life. As we've mentioned, and we hope you feel after trying a recipe or two, everything is indeed soup. The soupy waters are the central vortex of life connecting disparate forces, ingredients, elements, moving them in one society, reminding us when we do what is necessary, our soil and soul blossoms.

The soup pot is your vessel to traverse the stars, explore constellations and to grow younger with each stir of the spoon. As you experiment, your life will improve in taste, flavor and confidence.

Time is not linear, it is based on our experiences and our perceptions. This shapes our reality. In building out experiments, exploring recipes, in making soup we become, more connected to the eternal 'optimal' version of our deepest, most connected self. Paraphrasing Carl Sagan, "Soup is a way for the cosmos to know itself." The worlds, timelines, realities, everything is available in the present moment. Your job is to align with the eternally present version of yourself in the present.

The science of soup encompasses the universe, a way of thinking from which life is brought forth. It's not something you hold in your hand, it is something you have access to whenever you want. It is where you meet yourself in actions, in presence. It is the aliveness of ideas. They're coming to each person. Flowing through us in vibratory expressions

across the quantum fields. They're coming into you, your family, your kin. They're knocking on the doors of your life. Awaiting your opening up.

You don't own ideas. Ideas have their own consciousness. As we make soup in a vessel, as the vortex opens, they are born of our spell casting, our work, our putting grand gestures into play. Talked about by the masters, and recently by Elizabeth Gilbert in her book, *Big Magic*. Ideas are the property of the world. They have their own souls. And their job is to find a vessel that has the courage and the audacity and the discipline and the resilience to actually take them and make them manifest into form. When people are presented with an idea, flowing through them, it could be something for you to take on, to 'invent,' it might be a business you could start, or it could just be something for your own personal life.

Experience the world, allow your feelings, intuitions to become conscious, asking, guiding you, sharing with you ways to come into being. Everything is soup wants you to allow more and more delicious beauty to flow. You do not need to be ready, because technically no one's ready and everything is ready. Transmissions are always being broadcast. It is wholly available all the time. The questions, are you brave enough to carry me through birth, the ugly, messy processes so I might live, and turn the idea into real life. The broadcast wants to find a host. And if you don't answer, the idea will go to someone else. This is something Michael Jackson used to talk about all the time. He new he needed to write out the ideas he heard immediately, "I needed to act on them immediately. Because if I didn't, then they would go to somebody else, they would go to Prince, right?"

The idea doesn't care about being ready or perfection. There's no such thing as being like, "Oh, I'm not going to do it if I'm not going to get it perfect." The idea cares about courage to write it down and take action.

Do not wait for inspiration.

Begin the mastery of listening, writing down the magic and miracles wanting to come into consciousness. Ideas whisper to your soul from different timelines, where the idea already exists. Ideas need someone to help it come to life. Everything is soup connects to the vast swarm of cosmic chaos into the vortex as we man our vessel knowing all time is now.

Vegetables, an herb, a leaf will call out to you. Listen. Everything is connected. Making, eating and sharing our primordial soupiness nourishes the version of you where optimal wellness comes to life. All is well and all will be well. The soup cauldron is open. It's portal, giving and receiving love, undeniable. Now, it's your turn to make delicious soup.

# I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU PASTA E FAGIOLI

Love is forever with Sicilians. In every spoonful of this humble bowl, there's a love letter, handwritten in beans, pasta, garlic, and care. Sicilians cook with memory, with devotion, eternal and

## Flavor Energetics

Beans, beans, magic and miracles beans.

## Key Ingredients

Borlotti Bean  
Extra-virgin olive oil  
Tomato paste, (optional)  
Fennel rosemary

## Ingredients

Serves 4  
2 tbsps olive oil  
1 yellow onion, finely chopped  
3-4 nubs of garlic  
2 carrots, and fennel  
1 cup tubetti  
Kale or Swiss Chard  
6 cups vegetable broth  
Red pepper flakes  
Parmesan Rind  
Grated Parmesan



## Instructions

1. Heat oil
2. Add onion, carrots, and garlic
3. Add beans, water, salt, pepper, cinnamon. Cover and bring to a boil. Cook for 15 min, reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 ½ hr
4. Sauté the veggies, stir in garlic, tomato paste