



Ginger and Maryann, REALTORS
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March 2008

Irish Bacon and Cabbage Soup



PREP TIME 15 Min
 COOK TIME 30 Min
 READY IN 45 Min

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 pound Irish bacon, diced
- 2 large potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 (15 ounce) can diced tomatoes with juice
- 1 cup chicken stock, or as needed
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 cups thinly sliced dark green Savoy cabbage leaves

DIRECTIONS

1. Place bacon in a large, deep stockpot or saucepan.
2. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Drain off any excess fat.
3. Stir in potatoes, tomatoes, and enough chicken stock to cover.
4. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and let simmer for 20 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.
6. Stir in cabbage and allow the soup to simmer for a few minutes longer before serving.

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Servings Per Recipe: 4

Amount Per Serving
 Calories: 288
 Total Fat: 9.4g
 Cholesterol: 16mg
 Sodium: 757mg
 Total Carbs: 39.2g
 Dietary Fiber: 6.4g
 Protein: 11.1g

St. Patrick's Day History

The First Parade

St. Patrick's Day is celebrated on March 17, his religious feast day and the anniversary of his death in the fifth century. The Irish have observed this day as a religious holiday for thousands of years.

On St. Patrick's Day, which falls during the Christian season of Lent, Irish families would traditionally attend church in the morning and celebrate in the afternoon. Lenten prohibitions against the consumption of meat were waived and people would dance, drink, and feast—on the traditional meal of Irish bacon and cabbage.

The first St. Patrick's Day parade took place not in Ireland, but in the United States. Irish soldiers serving in the English military marched through New York City on March 17, 1762. Along with their music, the parade helped the soldiers to reconnect with their Irish roots, as well as fellow Irishmen serving in the English army.

Over the next thirty-five years, Irish patriotism among American immigrants flourished, prompting the rise of so-called "Irish Aid" societies, like the Friendly Sons of Saint Patrick and the Hibernian Society. Each group would hold annual parades featuring bagpipes (which actually first became popular in the Scottish and British armies) and drums.

Wearing of the Green Goes Global

Today, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by people of all backgrounds in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Although North America is home to the largest productions, St. Patrick's Day has been celebrated in other locations far from Ireland, including Japan, Singapore, and Russia.

In modern-day Ireland, St. Patrick's Day has traditionally been a religious occasion. In fact, up until the 1970s, Irish laws mandated that pubs be closed on March 17. Beginning in 1995, however, the Irish government began a national campaign to use St. Patrick's Day as an opportunity to drive tourism and showcase Ireland to the rest of the world. Last year, close to one million people took part in Ireland's St. Patrick's Festival in Dublin, a multi-day celebration featuring parades, concerts, outdoor theater productions, and fireworks shows.

... Real Facts

RISMEDIA, 2008-Beginning this week, the National Association of Realtors is reaching out to consumers with the facts about homeownership and the value of real estate as a long-term investment. Would-be homeowners who are uncertain about their home buying plans can learn more about the options available to them and the long-term benefits of owning a home through a new advertising campaign that will provide current, relevant housing data to help them make informed decisions about buying a home.

Over the past 30 years, the median price of existing homes has increased an average of more than 6% every year, and home values nearly double every 10 years, according to historical data from NAR's existing-home sales series. A Federal Reserve study has shown that the average homeowner's net worth is 46 times the net worth of the average renter. Despite this and other research, some potential home buyers are being kept on the sidelines as they react to national media reports about the housing market.

"Nobody buys a home in the national real estate market," said NAR President Dick Gaylord, a broker with RE/MAX Real Estate Specialists in Long Beach, California. "All real estate markets are local, and buyers and sellers who are thinking about making a move should consult with a REALTOR in their local market to learn about conditions specific to the area. It's also advisable to look beyond the immediate horizon — real estate has proven itself to be a good long-term investment and a safe, secure way to build long-term wealth."

According to NAR's most recent forecast, existing-home sales are likely to total 5.66 million in 2007, the fifth highest on record, rising to 5.70 million in 2008 and 5.91 million in 2009. Existing-home prices are likely to be down 1.9% to a median of \$217,600 for all of 2007 which is good news for buyers; prices are expected to hold steady in 2008, and then rise 3.1% in 2009 to \$224,400.

The campaign includes a new Web site, <http://www.HousingMarketFacts.com>, which provides more information about the benefits and value of owning a home, identifies current public policy issues of importance to consumers in the real estate transaction and allows visitors to link directly to <http://www.REALTOR.com> to find a REALTOR.

The ads are part of NAR's Public Awareness Campaign. For more than a decade, the Public Awareness Campaign has helped millions of consumers realize the value of using a Realtor® to help them buy or sell real estate, and is now educating consumers about the value of housing as a long-term investment. In 2008, campaign ads will be broadcast nationwide from January through November and will air more than 10,000 times on national TV and radio outlets. Local and state Realtor® associations are encouraged to coordinate with the campaign in their markets with local radio, TV and print buys.

Safety Tips - Natural Household Cleaners

Some commonly used household cleaning products may contain hazardous ingredients such as organic solvents and petroleum based chemicals. The EPA has found that these chemicals may contaminate our ground water and present a problem to waste water treatment facilities. Also, most often hazardous products are not disposed of properly and are land filled or incinerated where they release their toxins to the environment.

Natural Cleaners

All-purpose Cleanser: Mix 1/4 cup baking soda (or 2 teaspoons of Borax) with 1/2 cup white vinegar. The baking soda deodorizes, cleans and scours. It also softens hard water. The white vinegar cuts grease, stains and wax buildup and cleans mildew.

Note: This solution works great for water deposit stains. You can also use straight Borax instead of the baking soda and white vinegar. In addition to cleaning, scouring and deodorizing, Borax disinfects.

Bathroom Mold Cleanser: According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, mold can literally destroy the very thing these spores are growing on once they connect with a wet or damp spot. Mold spores cause allergy-like symptoms, and may exacerbate asthma. To eradicate mold, mix one part hydrogen peroxide with two parts water in a spray bottle. Use the 3 percent hydrogen peroxide that is available for a few dollars at any drug store or supermarket. Spray the bathroom areas and leave to dry for an hour. Rinse the areas off.

Soap: Avoid using a soap containing phthalates, parabens, synthetics or petroleum distillates. Check the label. If you prefer a solid bar soap, go for a clear soap without perfumes. If you prefer liquid soap, most health food stores carry liquid Castille soaps made with organic oils and mentha arvensis (the plant from which mint oil is extracted). Adding two squirts of this soap to two gallons of hot water will provide ample cleansing power.

