

TOP soups TESTED

8

Some like it hot

Roz Crowley

GETTING to grips with hearty soups is a satisfying way to celebrate the crisp, clear and invigorating months ahead.

A decent soup is easy to make, starting with a few chopped onions and garlic, cooked slowly in oil or butter for 10 minutes. All that is then needed are a few other vegetables such as grated carrots or potatoes, celery, turnip, beans, chickpeas, a can of tomatoes. Cook them with added stock or water until tender (grating helps to speed things up) and you're in business.

Soup is a good way to use up leftovers. Grated ends of cheese can be added at the last minute. Even an old Parmesan skin has tons of flavour.

Readymade soups have got better and better. They make a good base for a supper if you want to add more vegetables, chicken, turkey, ends of lamb — cheap fish pieces make superb chowders.

This week we looked at the more substantial fresh soups in the shops and found plenty to please. **IN**

■ See my blog rozcrowley.com for more recipe ideas



Cully & Sully smoked haddock & salmon chowder, 400g €2.59

A substantial soup, ideal as a supper for one, and even better if you try the suggestion on the label and add mussels. Plenty of natural flavours, nicely rich with a creaminess from real cream, not other thickeners. A gentle cayenne pepper hit livens up the flavour. Delicious.

Score: 9



Just Food Cuban black bean soup, 400g €2.79

All organic ingredients here zing with flavour. Substantial as expected with a bean soup, it also comes with tomatoes, carrots, celery and onion, with depth added with olive oil, garlic and fresh tasting spices and herbs. A good product. All tasters like this.

Score: 8.75



Tesco Finest Petit Pois, courgette & creme fraiche soup, 600g €3.45

Lots of healthy ingredients, not named in the title, such as asparagus and broccoli, are added to 18% peas and 4% courgette to make a soup every taster loved. A good, deep flavour from vegetable stock is thickened with cornflour but not too much, so the texture has some weight. Plenty of small peas make for a satisfying bite. A lovely taste of a great summer.

Score: 8.5



Marks & Spencer Moroccan style chicken soup, 600g €3.70

Decent chunks of chicken, lots of earthy spices (cumin, turmeric, chilli, coriander), lots of chickpeas (the most dominant texture) and rich tomato make this a tasty soup with lots of bite.

Score: 8



The Kitchen Castlemartyr butternut squash soup, 600g €7

Good, rich vegetable stock makes a great base for flavoursome butternut squash, finished with cream and butter. Delicious. In a heavy wide-necked hexagonal jar which can be recycled to use for homemade chutneys and jams, even small biscuits. Pricey. From Brown Thomas.

Score: 8



Nash 19 Celeriac soup, 600g €3.95

A sort list of ingredients here in this creamy, seasonal soup which brings out the best in this gnarled vegetable. Tasters liked it, with one suggesting it needed a little something extra to perk it up — the others appreciated its simplicity.

Score: 7.75



Fusion and Street Vegetable soup with puy lentils, 400g €2.59

A taste of Marrakesh it says on the label and, listed in very small print, we are told it has carrots tomatoes, onion, lentils, ginger, cumin, celery. The carrot was a bit spongy, as if rehydrated, and there wasn't quite enough ginger or cumin to justify its Marrakesh connection. But still, a pleasant soup with substantial lentils that tasters would buy again.

Score: 7.5



Avonmore Classic Cream of Chicken 400g €1.25

Resembling cans of chicken soups we have tasted in the past, this has plenty of tasty chicken pieces. While thickened with modified maize starch which makes it look quite gloopy when cold, once heated it smoothed out, helped by added cream and butter. What we expect cream of chicken soup to taste like. Handy as an inexpensive base for added vegetables such as broccoli for an easy supper.

Score: 7.25