

Meijer Chefs Reveal How to Make Three Popular Comfort Soups

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. – It's no surprise that during the dark frigid months of a Midwest winter, comfort foods reign supreme. And for many Midwesterners, comfort food comes in the form of soup. It turns out that soup may be bringing more comfort to more people this year as the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recently [reported](#) that there are more cases of influenza this year that rival the last severe outbreak.

Whether soup possesses healing qualities or not is debatable; however, according to [Fine Cooking](#), soup, being more liquid than most foods, helps with rehydration, as fevers and viruses rob the body of fluids. If illness or cabin fever is motivating you to make your own homemade soup, the Meijer chefs who oversee the retailer's fresh deli and meal selections offer their tips on making three popular soups of the season: *Creamy Lobster Bisque*, *Lemon Chicken Rice Soup*, and a vegetarian favorite, *Curried Winter Squash Laksa*.

The trick to making any good soup is to practice a simple method called *layering*, as in "layering flavor." In other words, you build upon each ingredient, hence the term, layering. Layering isn't complicated. It just takes time. And it is the key to making these soups delectable.

[Creamy Lobster Bisque](#) – When it comes to soups, a bisque is about the thickest you can get. Here are some tips to keep in mind when making lobster bisque.

- Roast the lobster shells in the oven and add them to the broth. Roasting the shells first adds a distinct flavor to the broth and enhances the overall outcome.
- Add the lobster (or shrimp or crab if you prefer to make another seafood bisque) *after* pureeing the bisque. Adding beforehand thickens the soup and may impact the flavor. Plus, adding the meat after adds texture.
- If the recipe calls for cream, stick with cream. According to the chefs, a bisque is a "cream of" kind of soup. The cream in this case also gives the soup a rich texture, whereas adding something like low fat milk would have to be thickened if used, probably with a roux of butter and flour. You can substitute coconut milk for cream without compromising flavor.

[Lemon Chicken Rice Soup](#) – Also known as *Avgolemeono*, Lemon Chicken Rice Soup may bring some relief to virus sufferers due to the extra energy boost in protein due to the eggs and chicken.

- It may be tempting to pile all of the ingredients in a pot and let it go. But in this case, avoid doing that or you might lose flavor overall.
- Watch the salt. You can always add more salt, but you can't take it away. For instance, when browning the onions, add the salt by the pinch. Adding salt draws out the moisture and allows the onions to stew in their juice without browning too fast.
- Add the rotisserie chicken once the soup is cooked and take it off the heat. The trick is to warm up the meat. Adding chicken before the soup is ready can overcook the meat.

[Curried Winter Squash Laksa](#) – *Laksa* is a spicy noodle soup that is a winter favorite thanks to the warming quality of spice and fiber-rich vegetables.


- You can use any winter squash – butternut, pumpkin, acorn – without compromising the flavor of the soup. Add the broccoli stems to the broth to be pureed. Save the broccoli florets to the end. They add a nice texture to the soup.
- Ladle the soup over the noodles. Do not add them to the broth. Also, take the time to add the garnishes like cilantro, mint or lime wedges. They are the key enhancements that make a good laksa.
- Take time to roast the chickpeas. The crunch texture will complement the smoothness of the soup. Your taste buds will thank you.

When storing any soup, it's important to completely chill a soup before storing it in the refrigerator. When reheating, reheat it on the stove versus the microwave. Reheating soup slowly reactivate the flavors.

About Meijer:

Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 235 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter [@twitter.com/Meijer](https://twitter.com/Meijer) and [@twitter.com/MeijerPR](https://twitter.com/MeijerPR) or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

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