

Soup Night!

Creamy Tomato, Mom's Chicken Noodle and Alphabet Soup are comforting, childhood favorites. Use their iconic emotional status to launch a cozy soup-night tradition that rates high on the clever-without-stress chart! It's perfect for Sunday dinners, impromptu parties and hosting holiday guests.

THINGS YOU'LL NEED:

Favorite Soup Recipes
Mismatched Soup Bowls And Spoons
Assorted Place Mats
Scrapbook
Simple Games





Photograph by Julie Toy; www.JulieToy.com

Start by doing some cabinet diving to rescue all the mismatched bowls, spoons and place mats that you were about to ditch because the rest of the set is missing in action. Make it a family tradition to collect unusual soup bowls and soup spoons at garage sales, antique stores and while on vacation. Finally a reason to break out the cowboy hat bowl and accessorize it with the boot-shaped spoon! Step back and watch everyone lunge for their wares, like when the little Monopoly race car piece is up for grabs.

Surf the family's favorite soup recipes or start the collection from scratch, then designate one day of the week as soup night (or every two weeks, once a month -- whatever works, baby).

Theme it up with interactive games: crossword puzzles and Scrabble for Alphabet Soup Night, speak Spanish (translation dictionaries allowed or just be spicy) on Tortilla Soup Night. Get creative: James Bond 007 Trivia makes Broccoli Soup Night a little more dangerous (as in, the Broccoli family who produces the James Bond films) while reading excerpts from the Chicken Soup For The Soul series of books on Chicken and Dumplings Night makes everyone feel warm and fuzzy!

Create a family heirloom by adding the recipes to a scrapbook, along with pictures of the eclectic soup nights.

EXTRA CREDIT

Once you've mastered the tradition, try featuring two soups: one hearty and one brothy, or supplement one soup with gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches or a salad. If guests are invited and ask what they can bring, answer enthusiastically: "salad or your favorite grilled cheese sandwich."