

SEASONED

NEWSLETTER



Welcome to *Seasoned* Newsletter #4. (If you missed the most recent one, it's [here](#).) Since we're all looking for comfort food, in this issue we feature two recipes for easy, homey soups. And if you're in the mood for a classic "soup and sandwich" combo, we've got an extra-tasty Egg Salad Sandwich. As always, there are a few kitchen tricks, plus an exercise to improve your balance. In this issue, we added an ergonomic tool that every cook needs, along with a teaser to give your brain a little workout. Finally, since so many of us are cooking for just one or two now, we've got some ideas about how to make it easier and more efficient.

Let's get started!



Tomato Soup with Cheddar Cheese

Sort of like a cross between tomato soup and a grilled cheese sandwich—in other words, the all-in-one best of both worlds—this soup is perfect for a chilly early spring day. It will keep in the refrigerator for 3 days, so you can have it for lunch one day, then have it for dinner (with a sandwich) a couple of days later.

HANDS-ON TIME: 30 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS MAKES: 6 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
 - 1 onion, peeled and chopped
 - 1 garlic clove, peeled and chopped
 - 1 celery stalk, sliced
 - 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil (or 1 teaspoon dried)
 - 2 (28-ounce) cans whole peeled or diced tomatoes, including the liquid
 - 4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
 - ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
 - ½ cup plain Greek or regular yogurt
 - 1 tablespoon vinegar (any kind is fine) or fresh lemon juice
- Kosher salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put a pot on the stove and turn the heat to medium. When the pot is hot, add the oil, onion, garlic, celery, and dried basil (if using). Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes and their juice and the broth. Raise the heat to high and bring to a boil.
3. Turn the heat down to low and cook, stirring occasionally, for 45 minutes. Set aside to cool for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Using a slotted spoon, remove slightly more than half of the solids and put them in a blender. Do not fill more than halfway. Put the top on but remove the little cap in the center. Cover the hole loosely with a dish towel.
5. Turn the blender to the lowest speed and increase the speed as the soup purees. Blend until smooth. Transfer to a large bowl.
6. Add the remaining solids to the blender and blend again. Gradually add the cooking liquid, fresh basil (if using), cheese, yogurt, and vinegar or lemon juice and blend until smooth. Add the mixture to the bowl with the first batch and mix well.
7. Serve right away, or cover and refrigerate up to 3 days.



Carrot and Apple Soup

The apple in this simple, delicious soup makes the carrots and onion taste even sweeter. You'll be surprised what a rich, complex flavor you get from just a handful of ingredients. Since the soup is blended after it's cooked, you don't need to worry about carefully chopping the onion, carrots, and apple—rough and chunky is fine.

HANDS-ON TIME: 35 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 2 HOURS MAKES: 3-4 SERVINGS



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive or vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and chopped
- 1 pound carrots, scrubbed and chopped
- 1 small apple, peeled (if you like), cored, and chopped
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- ¼ cup plain Greek or regular yogurt (if you like it creamy)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put a large lidded soup pot on the stove and turn the heat to medium. When the pot is hot, add the oil.
2. Add the onion, carrots, and apple, cover, and cook until the vegetables are beginning to soften, about 15 minutes. Use a wooden spoon to stir them occasionally while they cook.
3. Turn the heat to high, add the broth, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and cook until the carrots are tender, about 20 minutes. Set aside to cool for 20 minutes.
4. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the solids to a blender or food processor. Process until smooth. Add 2 cups of the cooking liquid and the yogurt, if you like, and process again, then stir this mixture back into the pot.
5. You can serve this soup right away, but it's even better if covered and refrigerated up to 3 days, then reheated.

Or You Could

- Add a couple of garlic cloves, peeled and roughly chopped, to the onion, carrot, and apple mixture during the last 2 minutes of cooking.
- Stir 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger into the onion, carrot, and apple mixture during the last 5 minutes of cooking.
- Mix in 2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro leaves after blending the soup.

Egg Salad Sandwich

If you've made hard-cooked eggs ahead of time, this sandwich comes together very quickly. We encourage you to make a half dozen hard-cooked eggs at a time, since they keep up to a week in the refrigerator and make great snacks all by themselves. That also gives you the chance to try all the suggested additions listed below. We particularly like chopped celery leaves in this recipe.

HANDS-ON TIME: 15 MINUTES TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES MAKES: 2 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon plain Greek yogurt
- 1½ teaspoons olive or vegetable oil
- ½ teaspoon prepared mustard (any kind is fine)
- ½ teaspoon dried parsley, dill, or tarragon, and/or 1 teaspoon finely chopped celery leaves
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 small celery stalk, minced
- 2 hard-cooked large eggs, peeled
- 4 slices multigrain or whole-wheat bread, toasted if you like

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put the yogurt, oil, mustard, herbs, and salt in a small bowl and mix well.
2. Add the celery and mix well again.
3. Cut the eggs in half lengthwise and then roughly chop them (they don't need to be evenly cut).
4. Add the eggs to the bowl and use a fork or spoon to mix well. Taste the egg salad and add more salt or herbs if you think it needs it.
5. Divide the egg salad between two slices of the bread, then top each with another slice and press down gently. Cut each sandwich in half and eat right away.



Or You Could

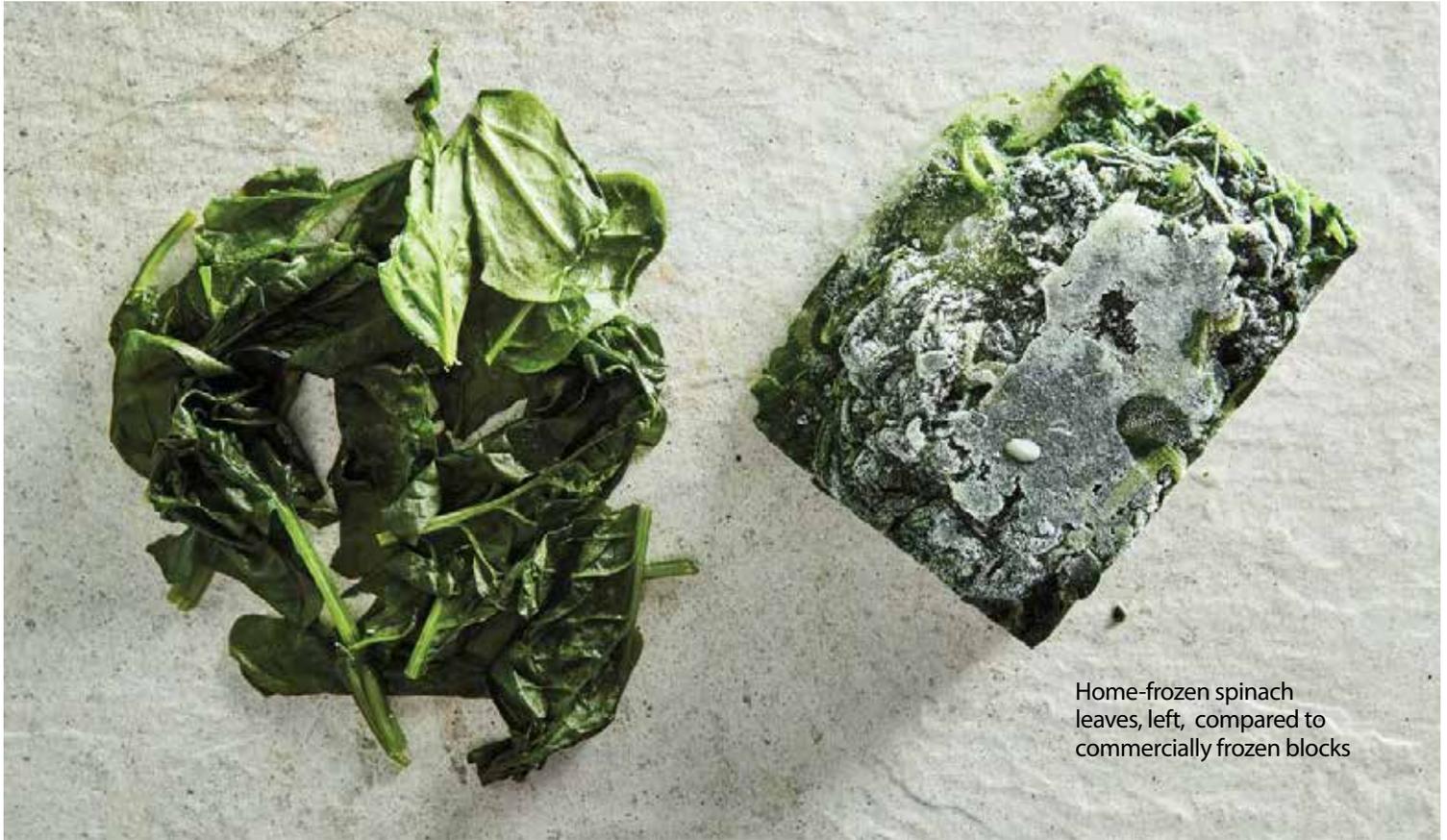
- **Curried Egg Salad:** Add ½ teaspoon curry powder and 2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro or basil leaves.
- **Lemony Egg Salad:** Add ½ teaspoon finely grated lemon zest and ½ teaspoon fresh lemon juice.
- **Oniony Egg Salad:** Add 1 tablespoon finely chopped red onion or scallion and 1 teaspoon slivered chives.
- **Creamy Egg Salad:** Double the amount of oil and yogurt called for in the recipe.

Use Those Leaves

Some cooks discard the leaves from celery stalks. That's a mistake—they have a wonderful fresh flavor, and can be used in salads or soups or anywhere you might use parsley. When you buy celery, you are basically getting a free fresh herb.

Kitchen Tips and Tricks

Sometimes it's not the big techniques, but the little tricks that count most in the kitchen. Here are a few we like that we learned either from experience or from other cooks.



Home-frozen spinach leaves, left, compared to commercially frozen blocks

Home-Frozen Spinach

Stock up on fresh bagged spinach when you can, then put the bag straight into the freezer. You can then use the frozen spinach in smoothies and in many other dishes. The advantage? Frozen spinach leaves don't stick together like frozen spinach blocks do.

Longer Banana Life

Wrapping the stems of your bananas in plastic wrap will make them last up to five days longer. The plastic helps trap the ethylene gas that bananas naturally produce as they ripen. This "fools" the bananas into ripening more slowly.



Avocado Brownout

One problem with avocados is that if you use only half, the other half turns brown in the refrigerator. And no one wants to lose half of a delicious (and relatively expensive) avocado. An easy solution? Cover the top of the remaining avocado half with a thin lemon slice. The acid in the lemon will keep the avocado from browning, but won't distort its flavor.



Sideways Walking

Sideways walking is an easy way of improving balance as well as ensuring your legs and hips get a different type of exercise than usual. Make sure you do this exercise on a flat surface.

Stand with your feet together, knees slightly bent. Move one foot to the side in a slow and controlled manner. Move the other foot over to join it. Try to avoid dropping your hips as you step. Perform 10 steps each way if you're outside, or if inside just step from one side of the room to the other.

ODDS AND ENDS

Great Gadget: OXO Good Grips 12" Tongs with Silicone Heads

Tongs are like an extra pair of hands that won't get burned. Use them for everything from moving chicken pieces around in a hot skillet to tossing salad to serving vegetables and pasta. The silicone heads let you safely use these with nonstick cookware.



Mind Stretcher

Q: Together, a ball and a bat cost \$1.10. The bat costs \$1.00 more than the ball. How much do they cost separately?

A: The bat is \$1.05. The ball is five cents.

HOW TO COOK FOR ONE OR TWO



Make less, store more

- **Make a half or quarter of your favorite casseroles** by halving the ingredients or dividing them by four. Bake in a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan or a 9-inch pie plate instead of the 13 x 9-inch dish usually called for in the full recipes. (Beware that cooking time might be a bit less.)
- **Think sandwiches:** Multigrain tortillas and whole-wheat pita breads keep well in the refrigerator. Pitas make perfect sandwich pockets, and tortillas are great for quick, easy, filling quesadillas.
- **Keep your pantry stocked** with canned foods, like tuna, chickpeas, black beans, white beans, diced tomatoes, and olives. They are very versatile, and will last for years.
- **Refrigerate whole-wheat flour, white flour, cornmeal, and other grains,** which are hard to buy in small amounts. They will last a couple of years.



Make the freezer your friend

- **Learn which of your favorite foods can be frozen,** and keep them on hand. Also, freezing leftovers is a great way to ensure a no-work meal in the future. Just be sure to date and label them—and don't let them work their way to the back of the freezer.
- **Buy frozen ravioli or tortellini** and boil only the amount you need. Keep prepared sauces, like bottled marinara or frozen pesto, on hand, too. Just spoon out or defrost the amount you need and return the rest to the fridge or freezer for the next time.
- **Embrace frozen produce.** Choose packages without added sauces, salt, or sugar. Since they're already chopped up, frozen fruits and vegetables are ready to add to smoothies, soups, and stir-fries. And because they're frozen, there is no rush to use them.