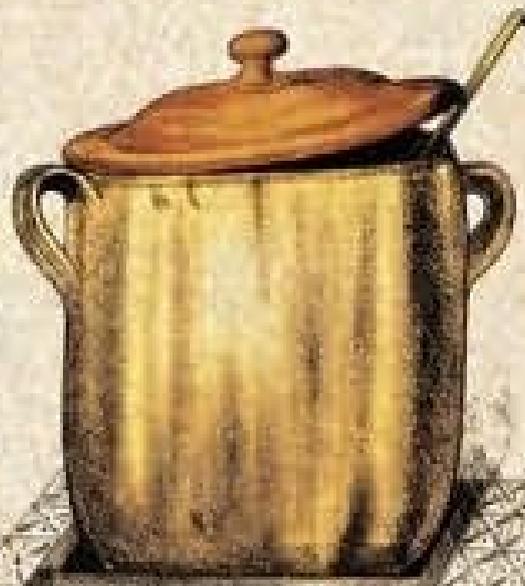


AN EXALTATION OF



S | O | U | P | S

THE SOUL-SATISFYING STORY
OF SOUP, AS TOLD IN MORE THAN 100 RECIPES

PATRICIA SOLLEY

AN
EXALTATION
OF



THE SOUL-SATISFYING STORY OF SOUP,
AS TOLD IN MORE THAN 100 RECIPES

PATRICIA SOLLEY



THREE RIVERS PRESS • NEW YORK

To Mother and Dad

CONTENTS

Introduction

PART I

SOUP BASICS

CHAPTER 1 THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF SOUP

CHAPTER 2 PROVERBIALY SOUP

CHAPTER 3 SOUP REFLECTIONS

CHAPTER 4 STOCKS AND FOUNDATIONS

PART II

SOUPS OF PASSAGE

CHAPTER 5 TO CELEBRATE AND RECOVER FROM GIVING BIRTH

CHINA: Chicken Soup with Ginger or Sesame Oil (*Gee tong*)

FRANCE: “Boiled Water” Garlic Soup (*Provençal’ l’aigo bouldo*)

JAPAN: Cabbage and Clam Miso Soup (*Kyabetsu to asari no misoshiru*)

KOREA: Clear Seaweed Soup (*Malgun miyok kuk*)

PUERTO RICO: Spiced Chicken Noodle Soup (*Sopa de fideos y pollo*) 45

CHAPTER 6 TO CELEBRATE RELIGIOUS CONFIRMATION

DENMARK: Meatball and Dumpling Soup (*Klarsuppe*)

CHAPTER 7 TO CELEBRATE MARRIAGE ... AND RECOVER FROM THE RIGORS OF THE HONEYMOON

CHINA: Red Bean and Lotus Seed Soup (*Hung dau lin jee tong*)

FRANCE: Breton Wedding Soup (*Soupe de mariage Bretagne*)

FRANCE: Breton Honeymoon Soup (*Soupe à l’oignon “Johnny”*)

GUATEMALA: Lamb Soup with Tamales (*Caldo de carnero*)

HUNGARY: Chicken Soup with “Snail” Pasta (*Tyúkhúsleves*)

ITALY: Wedding Soup with Meatballs (*Zuppa maritata*)

ITALY: Egg and Wine Honeymoon Soup (*Ginestrata*)

JAPAN: Fresh Clam Soup (*Hamaguri no sumashi-jiru*)

MOROCCO: Wedding Lamb Soup with Rice and Beans (*Harira*)

TURKEY: Bride Soup (*Ezo Gelin çorbasi*)

TURKEY: Spicy Beef Wedding Soup (*Dugun çorbasi*)

CHAPTER 8 TO HONOR THE DEAD

FRANCE: Saffron Soup (*Périgourdine le mourtaïrol*)

IRELAND: Cottage Broth for the Wake

PHILIPPINES: Crystal Noodle and Chicken Soup (*Sontanghon*)

PART III

SOUPS OF PURPOSE

CHAPTER 9 TO LOSE WEIGHT

The Cabbage Soup Diet

Starving Artist Soup

CHAPTER 10 TO STIMULATE AN APPETITE

Creamy Crab and Cognac Soup

Strawberry Balsamico Soup

FRANCE: Tarragon Jellied Consommé (*Consommé à l'essence d'estragon en gelée*) 100

MEXICO: Avocadolicious Soup (*Sopa de aguacate*)

SPAIN: Chilled "Pureed Salad" (Andalusian Gazpacho)

UNITED STATES: Iced Potato and Leek Soup (*Vichyssoise*)

CHAPTER 11 TO STRENGTHEN A CONVALESCENT

ARMENIA: Yogurt-Rice Soup (*Prinzov about*)

ENGLAND AND FRANCE: Beef Tea (*L'Essence de boeuf*)

EGYPT: Fava Bean Soup (*Ful nabad*)

FRANCE: Chicken Noodle Soup (*Savoyarde soupe de fides*)

ITALY: "Little Rags" Egg Drop Soup (*Stracciatella*)

JEWISH: Chicken Soup with Matzo Balls ("Penicillin")

KOREA: Chicken-Rice "White" Soup (*Paeksuk*)

PHILIPPINES: Rice Soup with Chicken (*Arroz caldo at manok*)

THAILAND: Rice Soup (*Kao tom*)

CHAPTER 12 TO WOO A LOVER

Aphrodisiac Almond Soup

ANDORRA/CATALONIA, SPAIN: Creamy Fennel Soup with Shallots and Orange Spice (*Sopa de fonoll*)

Curried Spring Asparagus Soup

THE WHAMMY: Lobster Sweetheart Soup

THE DOUBLE WHAMMY: Oyster Cream Soup with Lemony Carrots

THE TRIPLE WHAMMY: Saffroned Tomato-Fennel Soup

CHAPTER TO CHASE A HANGOVER

DENMARK: Beer Soup (*Ollebrod*)

FRANCE: Les Halles Onion Soup (*Soupe à l'oignon gratinée*)

GUATEMALA: Spiced Tomato-Egg Soup (*Caldo de huevo para la goma*)

HONDURAS: "Man" Soup (*Sopa de hombre*)

HUNGARY: "Night Owl" Soup (*Korhelyleves*)

PUERTO RICO: Tropical Tripe Soup (*Mondongo*)

RUSSIA: Kidney-Pickle Soup (*Rassol'nik*)

SENEGAL: Chicken Stew (*Yassa*)

PART IV

SOUPS OF PIETY AND RITUAL

CHAPTER
14

NEW YEAR'S DAY

HAITI: Pumpkin Soup (*Soupe joumou*)

IRAN (PERSIA): Noodle Soup (*Âsh-e reshteh*)

JAPAN: New Year Miso Soup with Rice Cake (*O-zoni*)

KOREA: Beef and Rice Coin Soup (*Ttok-kuk*)

MEXICO: Good Luck Soup (*Pozole*)

POLAND: Hunter Stew (*Bigos*)

TIBET: Fortune Noodle Soup (*Gutuk*)

UNITED STATES: Hoppin' John Soup

CHAPTER
15

ST. TAVY'S DAY (MARCH 1)

WALES: Leek Soup (*Cawn cennin*)

CHAPTER
16

EASTERTIDE

SHROVE TUESDAY/CARNIVAL

ICELAND: Salted Lamb and Pea Soup (*Saltkjöt og baunir*)

SWITZERLAND: Browned Flour Soup (*Mehlsuppe*)

LENT

ALBANIA: Bean Soup (*Jani me fasule*)

GREECE: Tahini Soup (*Tahinosoupa*)

ITALY: Lenten Bean and Vegetable Soup (*Minestrone di magro*)

MEXICO: Vigil Soup (*Caldo de vigilia*)

ROMANIA: Chilled Garlic-Bean Soup (*Supa de fasole*)

RUSSIA: Iced Sour Fruit and Vegetable Soup (*Okroshka postnaya*)

HOLY WEEK

CORSICA: “Soup of the Lord” (*Minestra di fasciolu seccu*)
UNITED STATES: New Orleans Gumbo (*Cajun Gumbo z’herbes*)

EASTER

ALBANIA, GREECE, AND CYPRUS: Lamb and Rice Soup (*Mayeritsa*)

BULGARIA: Iced Cucumber Soup (*Tarator*)

EGYPT: Lamb and Garlicky Rice Soup (*Fatta*)

ITALY: Meatball and Cheese Dumpling Soup (*Benedetto*)

POLAND: Sour Rye and Sausage Soup (*Barszcz*)

UKRAINE: Beet Soup (*Borshch*)

CHAPTER 17 JEWISH HISTORY AND FESTIVALS

ROSH HASHANAH

WORLDWIDE: Chicken Soup with Dumplings (*Goldene yoich mit kreplach*)

GEORGIA: Beef and Pomegranate Soup (*Kalia*)

IRAN: Vegetable and Rice Soup (*Âsh-e kalam-o haveej*)

IRAQ: Lemony Lamb Soup (*Kibbe hammoud*)

MOROCCO: Spicy Pumpkin and Split Pea Soup (*L’hamaak dilgar’a*)

YOM KIPPUR

LEBANON: Lemony Egg Soup with Chicken (*Beid ab lamouna*)

SUKKOT

POLAND: Spiced Plum Soup (*Zupa śliwkowa*)

PASSOVER

RUSSIA: Tart Beet Soup (*Russel borshch*)

YEMEN: Chicken Soup with *Chawayil* Spice (*Ftut*)

CHAPTER 18 ISLAMIC FESTIVALS

RAMADAN

ALGERIA: Tangy Wheat and Herb Soup (*Jary*)

INDONESIA: Soup Porridge with Vegetable Spice (*Babur anyang*)

LEBANON: Classic Red Lentil Soup (*Shorabit adas*)

MOROCCO: Lemony Lamb and Chickpea Soup (*Harira*)

SAUDI ARABIA (AND SYRIA): Barley Broth (*Tirbiyali*)

TURKEY: Dilled Yogurt-Rice Soup (*Yayla çorbasi*)

EID ALFITR

PAKISTAN: Chicken Broth (*Yakhni*)

CHAPTER CHRISTMAS

- BOLIVIA: [Christmas Chicken Soup \(*Picana de pollo para Navidad*\)](#)
- CHILE: [Conger Eel \(or Fish\) Chowder \(*Caldillo de congrio \[pescado\]*\)](#)
- CZECH REPUBLIC: [Christmas Fish Soup \(*Vánocní rybí polévka*\)](#)
- FINLAND: [Christmas Dried Fruit Soup \(*Sekahedelmäkeitto*\)](#)
- GREECE: [Lemon Soup \(*Soupa avgolemono*\)](#)
- HUNGARY: [Christmas Wine Soup \(*Borleves*\)](#)
- IRELAND: [Beef Consommé with Irish Whiskey \(“Dessicated” Soup\)](#)
- ITALY: [Chicken Escarole Soup \(*Minestra di Natale*\)](#)
- NEW ZEALAND: [Green Clam Soup \(Toheroa Chowder\)](#)
- POLAND: [Mushroom Soup \(*Zupa grzybowa*\)](#)
- PUERTO RICO: [Christmas Chicken Soup \(*Asopao de pollo*\)](#)
- RUSSIA: [Christmas Beet Soup \(*Borshch*\)](#)
- SLOVAKIA: [Sour Cabbage and Mushroom Soup \(*Kapustnica*\)](#)
- SPAIN: [Iced White Almond Soup \(Andalusian *Ajoblanco*\)](#)
- UNITED STATES: [New Orleans Seafood Gumbo](#)

CHAPTER [K](#)WANZAA
20

- CAMEROON: [Bitter-Leaf Soup \(*Ndolé*\)](#)
- GHANA: [Peanut Soup \(*Nkate nkwan*\)](#)
- NIGERIA: [Okra Soup \(*Obe ile*\)](#)
- TANZANIA: [Creamy Coconut-Banana Soup \(*M'tori supu*\)](#)
- ZIMBABWE: [Spicy Vegetable and Peanut Stew \(*Huku ne dovi*\)](#)

[Permission Acknowledgments](#)
[Acknowledgments](#)

INTRODUCTION

TO MY MIND, when you talk about soup, you're talking about so much more than a mostly liquid way of filling your stomach.

Consider the story of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at dinner in Japan with Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki. Mrs. Gandhi was served a clear soup in a dark bowl painted inside with pictures of the bamboo tree. Only a few vegetables and a single pigeon egg were floated in the broth, leaving the bowl's design visible. Mr. Suzuki asked her what she thought of the presentation. Instantly Mrs. Gandhi replied: "To my eyes, it [the egg] is a full moon shining over a dark forest on a clear night." Prime Minister Suzuki sat up straight, completely amazed at her spontaneous and accurate reply.

I like this story a lot because it captures in one fell swoop all the layers of purpose held in a bowl of soup: its edibility, yes, but also its intrinsic beauty, its identification with specific cultures, its universality, and its resonance on the most basic levels.

After all, what is the broth but salt and water—the sea, the source of all life? What are the ingredients in the soup but fauna and flora that man, oh so painfully and over millennia, domesticated, tamed, made his own, and sacrificed as food for his own survival? The soup served by Suzuki was quintessentially Japanese, symbolizing that country's cultural aesthetic and Buddhist values, and at the same time universal, so that it could evoke Mrs. Gandhi's intuitive reaction.

Look at a bowl of soup and see the evolution of foods created in remote locations over thousands and thousands of years, made into recipes passed from hand to hand, transported on the backs of Indian, Asian, and Arab traders, Roman soldiers, and European explorers, all the way to your supermarket.

Eat a bowl of soup and savor mouthfuls of human resolve since Neolithic times to bring warmth, health, and richness into the lives of their family members, their tribe, their community, their culture.

Consider a bowl of soup from any culture, and think how it came to reflect that specific people, their times of celebration, their passages of life, their most intimate life experiences.

That's what *An Exaltation of Soups* is all about. In these pages are the stories and recipes of both soups and soup traditions that most profoundly connect people all over the world. I began the collection many years ago out of sheer love of food and, yes, sheer love of research, too. An initial batch of interesting soup recipes evolved into a loose-leaf cookbook on top of my refrigerator, and this grew thick with notes and glosses as I stumbled over stories and histories and quotes that illustrated the soups and their ingredients. Over time, this raggy book seemed to take on a life of its own, naturally shaping itself into storied recipes that gave insight into the cultures from which they sprang. And when I translated it in 1997 into an ordered website at www.soupsong.com, the floodgates opened: readers from around the world commented on, corrected, refined, and authenticated my materials. It's been a long,

rewarding journey for me, really an exaltation of good food, good friends, warmth, and insight—an exaltation of soup. I hope you find in this book the long-lost recipe of the soup your great-great-grandmother used to make to celebrate a family wedding, and I hope you find a wealth of other recipes that will inspire you to share warmth, food, and fellowship with all the people in your life.

PART I

S O U P



“AMAZING SOUP”

<i>Amazing soup! (how sweet the taste!) That fill'd a wretch like me! I once did hunger, now am sate; Did thirst, am now replete.</i>	<i>The Lord has promis'd broth to me, His word my hope secures; He will my consommé provide, As long as life endures.</i>
<i>'Twas soup that filled my heart with pain And soup that pain reliev'd; How precious did that soup appear, When I was lost and grieved.</i>	<i>Yes, when this meat and bone shall fail, And mortal life shall cease; I shall possess, within the veil, Some vichysoisse and peace.</i>
<i>Thro' many sauces, salads and sweets, I have already bent; 'Tis soup that gratified my need, And soup that does content.</i>	<i>This earth shall soon dissolve like snow, The sun forbear to shine; But borscht, which call'd me here below, Will be for ever mine.</i>

—JERRY NEWMAN, contemporary Canadian poet and novelist

1

THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF SOUP



S_{STONE AGE PEOPLE} created soup before they had a pot to cook it in, a bowl to serve it in, or a gourd to drink it from.

In fact, it's not completely clear who first stumbled onto the concept of soup—anthropologists disagree, depending on their interpretation of existing artifacts. Some say it was one of the *Homo sapiens* gang, sometime after 80,000 B.C.E.—either the Neanderthals or the Cro-Magnons who ultimately did those poor Neanderthals in. Others argue for a later generation—Neolithic man, around 10,000 B.C.E.

I kind of like the Neanderthal theory. It was a particularly tough and dangerous world back then. These hunter-gatherers were stuck in the last blast of an Ice Age that killed off much of their food and many species. It was every man for himself as the Neanderthals ran fearfully from—and ran hungrily after—woolly mammoths, saber-toothed tigers, wolves, and other hominids. And yet Neanderthal skeletons have been found in France with teeth worn down below gum level—and deeply crippled skeletons have been found, too. This means that some older or sickly prehistoric men and women were kept alive only through the compassion of their communities and the brilliance of someone who could create hot and soupy food alternatives to incredibly cold indigestible plants and tough meat.

I try to put myself under the toque of that Stone Age Julia Child. I imagine him or her using bark to dip and carry water ... putting food in the water and noticing it soften or swell ... marking how plants and berries, meat and marrow chunks would infuse the water with color and flavor. I imagine him or her getting the idea of warming the broth from the warm mother's milk that kept little Neanderthal babies happy.

HERODOTUS ON SCYTHIANS BOILING SOUP IN ANIMAL SKINS, CIRCA 440 B.C.E.

If they do not happen to possess a cauldron, they make the animal's paunch hold the flesh, and pouring in at the same time a little water, lay the bones under and light them. The bones burn beautifully; and the paunch easily contains all the flesh when it is stript from the bones, so that by this plan your ox is made to boil himself, and other

victims also to do the like.

—HERODOTUS, *fifth-century B.C.E. Greek historian, Book IV, THE HISTORIES*

Soup! It's an unbelievable achievement—a matter of thought overreaching what was technologically possible at the time. In the words of anthropologist Sally McBrearty: “The earliest *Homo sapiens* probably had the cognitive capability to invent Sputnik ... but didn't yet have the history of invention or a need for those things.” But soup? Yes, he needed soup. He needed soup, so he imagined soup. He imagined soup, and he brought it into being, despite his lack of pots to cook it in.

In fact, soup turned out to be a transforming concept that changed early man's relationship to nature, increased his life choices, and created completely new needs and desires. One eon he's a vegetarian in the garden of Eden, the next he's scavenging or hunting raw flesh and sucking bone marrow ... then, almost suddenly, he's figured out an unbelievably complex process with tools to produce a hot meal. It's a gastronomic miracle, and it's art: multiple colors, multiple textures, multiple flavors—something created by man that had never existed before in the history of the world.

But how on earth could early man in 10,000 B.C.E., at the latest, have boiled things ... without the pottery that he finally created in 6000 B.C.E. and the cauldrons that followed in 3600 B.C.E.?

HOW CAN YOU MAKE SOUP WITHOUT POTS?

I propose two theories.

First, prehistoric man might have boiled animals in their skins. He could have flayed his prey, suspending the skin on forked sticks, filling the bag with water and food, and lighting a fire underneath. The skin would not catch fire because it would be cooked by the boiling water on the inside (but don't try this trick at home). In fact, this technique has been used by many cultures in recorded history, from Scythians in the fifth century B.C.E. to Irish and Scots in the sixteenth century.

Second, our ancestors might have used the “hot stone” method. First you dig a hole or find one, and fill it with water. Then you build a fire close by and heat stones in it. Then, one by one, and v-e-r-y carefully, you transfer the stones to the water until it boils. And it will. Stones can be heated to a temperature of 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit in a well-laid hearth. How do I know that? Because in 1954, archeologist Michael J. O'Kelly proved it in experiments with his students at primeval Irish sites: “They used the hearths to heat stones, used a dampened wooden shovel to dump them in the water, brought the water to a boil, and simmered a 10-pound leg of mutton for 3 hours 40 minutes by adding stones every few minutes.... Then they ate the results: ‘excellently cooked and most tasty.’ ”*

WHAT WENT INTO THE EARLIEST SOUPS?

After those first catch-as-catch-can soups of wild plants and animals, and after vast

fields of grain sprang up in Europe and Asia, it turned out to be grains and beans—early man’s first agricultural triumphs in Neolithic times—that went into soup. By 7000 B.C.E., Emmer wheat had been domesticated in Turkey, and barley, millet, and beans in Greece. By 5000 B.C.E., rice was being cultivated in China. These were the stuff of early soups. And, of course, these remain our most revered modern comfort foods. Read on.



GRAINS COOKED IN BROTH continue to be lovingly prepared in most cultures: porridges and gruels from ground wheat; couscous soups and farina soups; barley soups and *tsampas*; oatmeal soups and rice congee. Imagine the astonished look on ancient man’s face when he first witnessed the miracle of chemistry—when heating caused these cereal grains to release starch granules into the broth and make it thick.

“**T**HE **T**OLLUND **M**AN”

*... Some day I will go to Aarhus
To see his peat-brown head,
The mild pods of his eye-lids,
His pointed skin cap.*

*In the flat country near by
Where they dug him out,
His last gruel of winter seeds
Caked in his stomach....*

*Out here in Jutland
In the old man-killing parishes
I will feel lost,
Unhappy and at home.*

—SEAMUS HEANEY, *contemporary Irish poet*

Bean/pea soup was in vogue long before Esau sold his birthright for it (that biblical “mess of pottage” was lentil soup), and it is an established part of every cuisine in the world without exception—every one! From *feijoada* in Brazil, to *huku ne dovi* in Zimbabwe, to *misoshiru* in Japan, and everything in between.

And then there’s the ancient variation of ground wheat made into a bread that turns so hard without today’s modern preservatives that it can be made edible again only by pouring boiling broth over it. I know this bread from the years I spent living in Morocco: that marvelous freshly baked *kisra*—a thick Frisbee of chewy bread—would turn to stone in twenty-four hours. This is called “sop” when dunked in hot liquid and is the origin of our words soup, *soupe*, *sup*, *sopa*, *soppe*, *zuppe*, *shorba*, *çorbasi*. This

combination is the basis of Portuguese *sopa secos* and *asordas*; Arabic *shorbas*; Spanish garlic soup; French panades, onion soup, and *garbure*; Italian *aquacotta*; Danish *ollebrod*, Estonian *leivasupp*, and French *l'aïgo bouldo*. You'll find an Egyptian *fatta* soup whose very name means to break crisped pita bread into food.

So there you have it. This part of our everyday cuisine, this soup that we take so much for granted, began life as a miracle of intellection, kept humankind alive through extremes of privation over the ages, and now serves to bind our common humanity, nurse our ills, and mark life's passages.

When I ponder soup, I think of ancient Tollund Man, dug out of a Danish peat bog in the 1950s and perfectly preserved. He'd been ritually sacrificed to the gods—strangled—but first given a fine last meal, still intact in his stomach. What was it? You know what it was: it was soup. A thick soup of grain and weed seeds ground in a hand mill and boiled.

* M. J. O'Kelly, "Excavations and Experiments in Early Irish Cooking-Places," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquities in Ireland* (1954), 84, 105–55.



IN THE SOUP

“Oh, you are SO full of soup!”

“No, not at all. Alas, after what I did last night, with all the best intentions, I’m actually in the soup.”

“Ah, and crying in your soup, no doubt. What happened?”

“The usual: too many cooks spoiled the broth.”

“Oh right, it’s always so easy to blame others for your own mistakes: the chicken always blames the soup pot for its tragic end.”

“I protest! You aren’t seeing both sides. Remember, the bowl cannot be warmer than the soup.”

“Protest away, but I still say that whatever is put in the soup kettle comes out on the spoon.”

“You are so hard-hearted. And yet, I admit that it’s been hard eating all this bad soup with a big spoon.”

“Well, you know what they say, ‘a spoon does not know the taste of soup, nor a learned fool the taste of wisdom.’”

“Ouch, give me a break, doll. And yet I’ve learned my lesson: He who once burns his mouth, always blows the soup.”





P_{HEW.} **T**_{EN SOUP PROVERBS} from as many different countries. Proverbs sure are funny things. You wouldn't believe the ink exhausted by scholars of proverbs (yes, they do exist and are called paremiologists) just trying to define the damn things:

"Old gems of generationally tested wisdom"

"The smallest genre of verbal folklore"

"The wit of one; the wisdom of many"

"A condensed allegory"

"The edged tools of speech"

Paremiologically speaking, here's my favorite, from Bartlett Jere Whiting's *The Nature of the Proverb*: "A proverb is an expression which, owing its birth to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase. It expresses what is apparently a fundamental truth—that is, a truism—in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliterations and rhyme. It is usually short, but need not be; it is usually true, but need not be. Some proverbs have both a literal meaning and a figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense; but more often they have but one of the two."

In short, there's a lot of soup in them thar proverbs and a lot of proverbs about soup, and I think there's good reason why.

Let me take you back in the history of the world. It wasn't always like it is now, people hunched in front of computers munching on take-out pizzas and creating high-tech proverbs about "garbage in, garbage out." Stay with me here.

Once upon a time, people came home to a hearth and a cooking pot and made conversation in flickering firelight about the events of the day. Young people would speak up naively or impatiently, "I can't *believe* the corn hasn't started sprouting!" Older folks would philosophically gaze into the simmering dinner, thinking about the unsprouting corn and their own hunger, and opine, "A watched pot never boils." Bingo, proverb.

It's nice to think about, isn't it—that time of apparently slower natural rhythms? When was the last time you gathered things from the garden, built a fire, brought water to a boil, and, hungry and expectant, thought about how these processes spoke to the larger questions that tug at the heartstrings of mankind? There is something beautiful about rituals building metaphors for life and finding room for reflection.

As Mr. Whiting said, though, some proverbs are just talking about that liquid stuff in a bowl, pure and simple:

"Eat soup first and eat it last, and live till a hundred years be passed." (F_{RANCE})

“To make a good soup, the pot must only simmer or ‘smile.’” (FRANCE)

“A good soup attracts seats.” (GHANA)

“A house without soup is an unlucky house.” (RUSSIA)

“Of soup and love, the first is best.” (SPAIN)

“Troubles are easier to take with soup than without.” (YIDDISH)

“Good broth will resurrect the dead.” (SOUTH AMERICA)

“Broth to a cook is voice to a singer.” (CHINA)

Other proverbs are still about soup pure and simple, but they imply other things, too:

“A soup that tastes good by licking must taste better by eating.” (AFRICAN ANNANG TRIBE)

“Plenty fish or meat does not spoil the soup.” (GHANA)

“Cheap meat never makes good soup.” (AZERBAIJAN)

“If there are two cooks in one house, the soup is either too salty or too cold.” (IRAN)

“The best soup is made of old meat.” (FRANCE)

“Ye who buy cheap meat will regret when you taste its broth.” (SYRIA)

“One cannot make soup out of beauty.” (ESTONIA)

“Too many peas spoil the soup.” (UNITED STATES)

“He who stirs the soup pot eats first.” (UNITED STATES)

“If they can’t eat the soup, they can spit in it.” (HAITI)

“The more eggs, the thicker the soup.” (BRAZIL)

“Soup is cooked hotter than it’s eaten.” (GERMANY)

And then there are those proverbs that, with a leap of imagination, use the image of soup to express a truth that really has nothing to do with soup at all:

“A rat’s droppings can spoil a whole cauldron of soup.” (CHINA)

“The chicken in the coop has grain, but the soup pot is near; the wild crane has none, but its world is vast.” (CHINA)

“The disobedient chicken obeys in a pot of soup.” (BENIN)

“It is only the bones that rattle in the pot.” (LEBANON)

“If a man makes soup of his tears, ask him not for broth.” (AFRICA)

“Between the hand and mouth, the soup is lost.” (ITALY)

“The broth is cooking, and now we have to act as one.” (BEDOUIN)

“When it rains soup, the poor man has no spoon.” (SWEDEN)

“Better no spoon than no soup.” (GERMANY)

“Boil stones in butter and the broth will be good.” (SCOTLAND)

“In your neighbor’s soup, there is always one fatty morsel.” (IRAN)

“From all the fish in the pot, you can only make one soup.” (MADAGASCAR)



And remember the “lesson learned” (GERMANY) about the burned mouth blowing soup in the opening story? Here are more of the same:

“One who has been burned by the soup begins to blow on the yogurt.” (SAUDI ARABIA)

“Having learned his lesson with hot soup, he blows cold fish salad.” (JAPAN)

“Who has been scalded with hot soup blows on cold water.” (RUSSIA)

“He who burnt himself with soup blows also in the sour milk.” (ROMANIA)

So, all around the world, everyday language for a variety of circumstances is peppered with proverbs, and often these proverbs refer to food ... and soup. Is it any wonder, then, that food—and soup in particular—is a major operative in the conventional wisdom of proverbs, the very recipes of culture?

3

SOUP REFLECTIONS

SOUP AS HUMOR

Well, dinner would have been splendid if the wine had been as cold as the soup, the beef as rare as the service, the brandy as old as the fish, and the maid as willing as the Duchess.

—WINSTON CHURCHILL, twentieth-century British statesman

It looks like a tortoiseshell cat having a fit in a bowl of tomato soup.

—MARK TWAIN, nineteenth-century American humorist,
about a J. M. W. Turner landscape painting

Sex is like eating a meal. Sometimes you just want a bowl of soup, and other times you want the three-course meal.

—ELIZABETH HUSS, contemporary American sex therapist

Marriage is the meal where soup is better than the dessert.

—AUSTIN O'MALLEY, early-twentieth-century
American medical writer

Memories are like mulligatawny soup in a cheap restaurant. It's best not to stir them.

—P. G. WODEHOUSE, twentieth-century English humorist



SOUP AS A CAUSE OF PLEASURE AND GOODNESS

Whenever I sit with a bowl of soup before me, listening to the murmur that penetrates like the distant song of an insect, lost in contemplation of the flavors to come, I feel as if I were being drawn into a trance.

—JUNICHIRO TANIZAKI, twentieth-century Japanese novelist,
In Praise of Shadows

I'm now painting with all the élan of a Marseillais eating soup, which won't surprise you when I tell you I'm painting large sunflowers.