



Voyageur Stew

Ingredients:

1/2 pound bacon, chopped
1 cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, minced
1 pound dry split peas
6 cups chicken broth
2 bay leaves
1/2 teaspoon salt or to taste
1/8 teaspoon ground black pepper or to taste

In a Dutch Oven pot, fry bacon until crisp; remove; set aside.
Add onion to bacon drippings; sauté until soften; stir in garlic, cook for 1 to 2 minutes.

Meanwhile sort through the peas, discarding any pebbles or other foreign material.
Rinse peas; Add peas and broth to pot. Season with bay leaves, salt, and ground black pepper. Cook covered for about an hour, adding more broth if necessary; stir occasionally. Taste the stew; remove the bay leaves; season to taste with salt and black pepper.

Enhanced Original Recipe by: French Cooking in Early America by Patricia B. Mitchell, 2011.

Recipe additions according to: *Feast of the Hunters; Moon Cook Book*, Lafayette Indiana, 2015 Recipe *Voyageur Pea Soup*

Suggested additions: 2 stalks celery, chopped, 1 leek, chopped,
2 potatoes, diced, 2 Tablespoons butter, thyme, thick smoked ham slice chopped.

About the Recipe: Pioneer stews like this one use only a few seasonings. Pork trimmings from the trappers were added for additional flavor. Bacon or chopped smoked ham adds a delightful grilled flavor to the split peas. If desired, add additional herbs and ingredients as suggested in the Recipe Additions.

History of the Dish:

The Voyageurs paddled the big canoes that brought supplies, and they usually stayed in the post over the winter before transporting the furs back north. Their food was cooked in a tin kettle which held eight to ten gallons and hung over the fire. They might have this stew for breakfast. The peas were soaked to soften and pork strips were added for seasoning. They simmered until daylight. The cook added broken biscuits to the stew and this mixture was so thick that a stick could stand upright in it

Soups, stews, hash, and perhaps bread were the main foods for the early explorers and immigrants. One pot meals were common, served by a cook, who fed trappers and hungry families. As the wilderness was tamed, French styled foods added herbs and more complex flavors.

For More Information See: *French Cooking in Early America and Feast of the Hunters' Moon Cook Book.*