Hearty Split Pea Soup

With all the added root vegetables and ham, this soup is a meal onto itself. By omitting the ham, it also makes a great vegetarian soup. – Rie Sluder

3 quarts water
2 cups dried split peas (about a pound)
2 Tbs. olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup onions, finely chopped
1 cup carrots, finely chopped
1 cup potato, peeled and diced
1 cup turnip or rutabaga, peeled and diced
2 large ribs of celery, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
1 tsp. dried thyme
2 tsp. salt
¼ tsp. black pepper
¼ cup fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 tsp. cider vinegar
¼ lb. diced cooked ham (or more to taste)
1 tsp. maple syrup (optional)

1. Bring water to boil in large soup pot. Sort through split peas, removing grit and discolored peas. Rinse. Add the peas to the boiling water, lower heat and cover loosely. Simmer for one hour, stirring occasionally, until split peas are tender.

2. Meanwhile, sauté onions until soft. Add garlic, carrots, celery, bay leaf and thyme. Continue cooking until vegetables are just tender.

3. Add sautéed vegetables along with the potatoes, turnip or rutabaga, salt, pepper, vinegar and parsley to cooking peas. Cook the soup about 20 minutes more or until the peas have dissolved and the potatoes and turnip are tender, stirring occasionally and adding water if needed. Add ham and maple syrup. Cook until heated through. Adjust seasonings and serve.

Serves 6.

Hint: If soup becomes too thick after standing, thin with hot water.