

You will need: a large heavy-bottomed pot with a tightfitting lid; one medium onion; four to five celery stalks; three medium carrots; dried thyme leaves; salt and pepper; two ham hocks or one meaty ham bone (optional); a pound of dried split peas; water, vegetable broth, or chicken broth

Step
1



Heat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit (it will take at least 20 minutes to warm up) and arrange a rack in the middle.

Step
2



Chop all the vegetables into bite-sized pieces.

Step
3



Put the vegetables in the pot with a quarter-sized handful of dried thyme. Season generously with salt and pepper, then add the ham hocks or bone (if using) and split peas.

Step
4



Add water or broth until the food in the pot is covered by about one to two inches of liquid.

*From the store to the kitchen to the table: We outline the steps that get you from raw ingredients to your dinner tonight, free of measurements and complicated techniques. It's a method you'll remember and whip out whenever you like. It is the most basic way to make the thing you're making.

Step
5



Cover the pot and put it in the oven. Let the soup cook until the peas are soft and almost disintegrating and the meat on the ham hocks or bone is falling off the bone, about two hours.

Step
6



Take the soup out of the oven and remove the ham hocks or bone. Shred the meat if desired, add it back to the soup, and stir. Add a little warm water if the soup is too thick, and season with additional salt and pepper to taste.

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