

Cooking with the Club

by our own
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Send Us Your Recipes!

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Warm Up Your October With Dips, Chilis, Soups and a Bewitching Brew

When I think of October and the rest of autumn, this is what comes to mind—and stomach: apples, cider, squash, hot soups, turkey, the savory sweet taste of pumpkin pie, bread and all those Halloween treats. It's also the time of year when the kids start spending a little more time indoors and need some activities and snacks to occupy their minds and hands.

Try out these fall theme recipes. Let's start with a recipe from Janine from Rec and Parks: a wonderfully flavorful **Creamy Spinach Soup**. She says that this was her way to get her kids to have green vegetables in their diets without them really paying attention to what is in the soup.

If you make chili already, you would know that there are quite easily hundreds of ways to make chili. Of those, there are perhaps dozens that are easy to make. My idea of easy cooking is when you can toss all ingredients into a container, pot, or pan, heat it, stir it, and finally serve it. The **Oh So Easy Chili** recipe fits that type of cooking well.

(By the way, does anyone know the history of chili? Allow me to share. It is said that the first recipes appeared in West Texas sometime

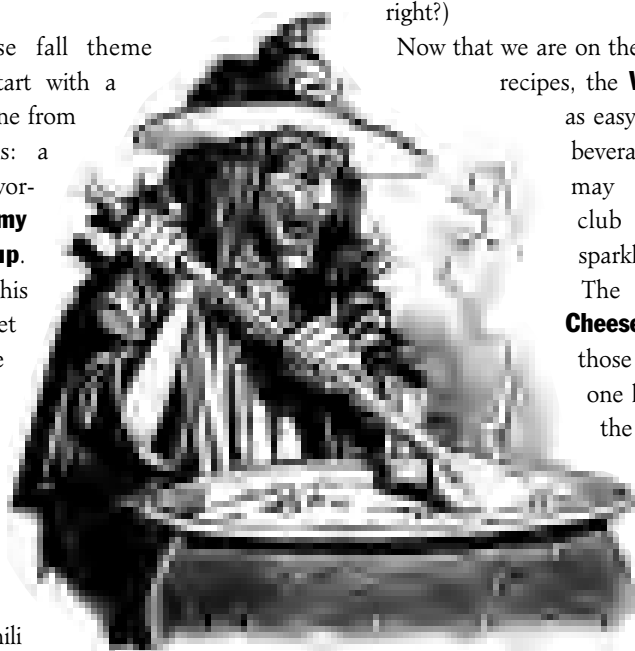
during the time Theodore Roosevelt was president of the United States. Most of the spices used in chili today were used then except for chili powder, which requires processing in a manufacturing plant, which had not been invented until decades later. Additionally, most of the chili then didn't have beans. Little did you know that you would be cooking and learning about the history of the food, right?)

Now that we are on the subject of easy recipes, the **Witch's Brew** is as easy to make as any beverage can be. You may substitute the club soda with sparkling water.

The **Spooky Hot Cheese Dip** is one of those dips that everyone loves anytime of the year. Why not as a Halloween appetizer? The Spooky Hot Cheese Dip is definitely an

appetizer most appropriate for a Halloween party. That's according to Maria, who works at the Department of Water and Power. She says that it will keep warm in a small crock pot if left on low heat. Maria knows what she is talking about: I have tried it and it makes high marks with me on the tasty scale. 🍲

**Enjoy October, everyone!
And keep sending in those recipes.**



Witch's Brew

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pints grape juice
- 1 1/2 pints club soda
- Grapes
- Apples

DIRECTIONS

- Mix the grape juice and soda in a pitcher.
- Halve the grapes and take out the seeds.
- Cut the apple into small chunks.
- Float the fruit in the brew just before serving.



Spooky Hot Cheese Dip

An easy and quick appetizer for your next Halloween party.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup medium or hot picante sauce.
- 8 ounces (2 cups) deli American cheese (you can substitute for another type of cheese), shredded.
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed, drained.
- 1 (4 ounce) can mild or hot chopped green chiles, drained.
- Tortilla chips.

DIRECTIONS

- Combine all ingredients except tortilla chips in 2-quart saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until cheese is melted (8 to 10 minutes).
- Serve warm with tortilla chips for dipping.

Makes 2 1/2 cups.

TIP: A small electric slow cooker makes a great serving container and keeps the dip warm. Keep it set on the low heat setting.



Creamy Spinach Soup

A great way to sneak green vegetables into kids' diets is to purée them into a delicious, creamy soup. This one is light and thin. If you would like it thicker, add another potato and increase the salt to taste.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 8-ounce russet potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 quart organic vegetable broth
- 6 ounces baby spinach leaves
- 1/4 - 1/2 teaspoon salt, to taste
- Pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup half-and-half or milk

DIRECTIONS

- Place potato pieces in a medium-large saucepan and add 1-1/2 cups broth. Bring to a boil, lower heat to simmer, cover, and cook until pieces are tender, about 8 minutes. Add spinach and salt, stir, cover again, and cook about 3 minutes longer, or until spinach is wilted but still bright green.
- Transfer cooked mixture to a blender and purée until smooth. Add additional broth if necessary.
- Return mixture to pan, add remaining broth, and heat. When hot, remove from heat and stir in half-and-half or milk. Taste to adjust salt, and serve.

Serves 6 to 8



Oh So Easy Chili

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound ground beef or turkey
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped green bell pepper
- 2 1/2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 1 can tomatoes, chopped, undrained (28 ounces)
- 1 can tomato sauce (14 ounces)
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon dried marjoram
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 can chili beans or kidney beans, undrained (15 ounces)
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

- Cook first 3 ingredients in a large saucepan until meat is browned, stirring until it crumbles; drain.
- Add chili powder and next 8 ingredients, stirring well; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, 1 hour and 30 minutes to 2 hours.
- Add beans, stirring well, and cook until thoroughly heated.
- Find and remove bay leaf before serving.

Serves 6

