



Senate Bean Soup

Bean soup is on the menu in Senate restaurants every day. There are several stories about the origin of that mandate, but none have been corroborated.



According to one story, the Senate's bean soup tradition began early in the 20th century at the request of Senator Fred Dubois of Idaho. Another story attributes the request to Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota, who expressed his fondness for the soup in 1903.

The recipe attributed to Dubois includes mashed potatoes and makes a 5-gallon batch. The recipe served in the Senate today does not include mashed potatoes, but does include a braised onion. Both Senate recipes are below.

The Famous Senate Restaurant Bean Soup Recipe

2 pounds dried navy beans

4 quarts hot water

1 1/2 pounds smoked ham hocks

1 onion, chopped

2 tablespoons butter

salt and pepper to taste

Wash the navy beans and run hot water through them until they are slightly whitened. Place beans into pot with hot water. Add ham hocks and simmer approximately three hours in a covered pot, stirring occasionally. Remove ham hocks and set aside to cool. Dice meat and return to soup. Lightly brown the onion in butter. Add to soup. Before serving, bring to a boil and season with salt and pepper. Serves 8.

Bean Soup Recipe (for 5 gallons)

3 pounds dried navy beans

2 pounds of ham and a ham bone

1 quart mashed potatoes

5 onions, chopped

2 stalks of celery, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

half a bunch of parsley, chopped

Clean the beans, then cook them dry. Add ham, bone, and water and bring to a boil. Add potatoes and mix thoroughly. Add chopped vegetables and bring to a boil. Simmer for one hour before serving.