

Introduction

Cabbage soups have been a comfort food for generations, and this unstuffed cabbage soup brings all the classic flavors of a traditional stuffed cabbage roll but without the extra effort. It's a hearty, nutritious meal packed with vegetables, protein, and delicious seasonings. If you're looking for a one-pot meal that is both easy to make and satisfying, this recipe will hit the mark. Let's explore how to create this one-pot unstuffed cabbage soup and what makes it such a versatile and crowd-pleasing dish.

Detailed Ingredients

One of the key benefits of this unstuffed cabbage soup recipe is the simplicity of its ingredients. You likely have most of these items in your kitchen, making this an affordable and accessible dish.

- **Ground Beef or Ground Turkey:** A pound of ground beef or ground turkey adds protein and richness to the soup. Choose lean options if you're watching your fat intake.
- **Onion:** A medium onion, finely chopped, brings a layer of sweetness and depth to the soup.
- **Garlic:** Minced garlic cloves (about 3-4) enhance the flavor and aroma of the dish.
- **Green Cabbage:** One small or half a large green cabbage, chopped, provides the bulk of the soup. Cabbage adds a crunchy texture and soaks up the flavors well.
- **Carrots:** Diced carrots bring a touch of sweetness and color to the soup, making it more visually appealing.
- **Diced Tomatoes:** A can of diced tomatoes with their juice adds acidity and balances the sweetness of the vegetables and meat.
- **Tomato Sauce:** Tomato sauce provides a rich base that enhances the soup's flavor.
- **Beef or Chicken Broth:** Use about 4 cups of beef or chicken broth, depending on your meat choice. It serves as the main liquid component and adds depth to the soup.
- **Seasonings:** Salt, pepper, paprika, and bay leaves season the soup perfectly, bringing out the natural flavors of the vegetables and meat.
- **Optional Additions:** You can also add grains like rice or quinoa for a heartier dish, or use different herbs and spices such as thyme, oregano, or red pepper flakes.



Prep Time, Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

Before diving into the cooking process, it's essential to understand the time investment and the yield of the recipe.

- **Prep Time:** 15 minutes

- **Cook Time:** 40 minutes
- **Total Time:** 55 minutes
- **Yield:** This recipe yields about 6 to 8 servings, making it a great choice for family dinners or meal prepping.

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Here's a step-by-step guide to creating this one-pot unstuffed cabbage soup:

1. **Cook the Ground Meat:** In a large pot or Dutch oven, heat a tablespoon of olive oil over medium heat. Add the ground beef or ground turkey and cook until browned. Make sure to break the meat up into small pieces as it cooks. Once fully browned, drain any excess fat if necessary.
2. **Add Onions and Garlic:** After draining the meat, stir in the chopped onions and garlic. Let them cook together with the meat until the onions are soft and translucent, about 3 to 5 minutes. This step helps develop the base flavor for the soup.
3. **Incorporate the Vegetables:** Add the chopped cabbage and diced carrots to the pot. Stir everything together and let it cook for another 5 minutes to slightly soften the vegetables.
4. **Add Tomatoes and Broth:** Pour in the can of diced tomatoes (with their juice), tomato sauce, and broth. Stir the ingredients to combine them well. At this point, add your seasonings: salt, pepper, paprika, and bay leaves. Stir everything together again.
5. **Simmer the Soup:** Bring the soup to a boil over medium-high heat. Once it starts to boil, reduce the heat to low and cover the pot. Let the soup simmer for about 30 minutes or until the cabbage and carrots are tender.
6. **Optional Grains Addition:** If you want to make the soup heartier, you can add a cup of cooked rice or quinoa to the pot during the last 10 minutes of cooking. Stir it in and allow it to absorb some of the broth's flavor.
7. **Taste and Adjust Seasoning:** Before serving, taste the soup and adjust the seasonings if necessary. You might want to add more salt, pepper, or even a dash of hot sauce if you like a bit of heat.
8. **Serve:** Ladle the soup into bowls and serve warm. You can garnish with fresh parsley or a dollop of sour cream for extra flavor if desired.

Notes

There are a few important tips to keep in mind when preparing this unstuffed cabbage soup:

- **Make It Vegetarian:** To make a vegetarian version, simply omit the meat and replace it with more vegetables or a plant-based protein like lentils or beans.
- **Meal Prep Friendly:** This soup stores well in the fridge and freezer, making it a great meal prep option. Store leftovers in airtight containers, and it will keep in the refrigerator for up to 4 days or in the freezer for 3 months.
- **Adjusting Consistency:** If you prefer a thicker soup, reduce the amount of broth or let it simmer uncovered for the last 10 minutes to reduce the liquid. If you like a thinner soup, add an extra cup of broth or water.

Cook Techniques

A few techniques make this unstuffed cabbage soup both flavorful and easy to prepare:

- **Browning the Meat:** Browning the ground beef or turkey before adding the vegetables helps develop a deeper flavor in the soup. Be sure to cook the meat thoroughly and drain any excess fat for a healthier option.
- **Simmering for Maximum Flavor:** Allowing the soup to simmer after all the ingredients are combined ensures that the flavors meld together. This low and slow cooking method softens the vegetables while infusing them with the meat and broth flavors.
- **Vegetable Varieties:** Feel free to get creative with the vegetables you use. If you want to add more texture and variety, try including bell peppers, zucchini, or even a handful of spinach towards the end of cooking.

FAQ

Can I use a different type of meat?

Yes, this recipe is flexible, and you can use ground chicken, pork, or even a meatless alternative like crumbled tofu or tempeh.

Is this recipe gluten-free?

Yes, as long as you ensure that your broth and other ingredients are gluten-free, this unstuffed cabbage soup is naturally free of gluten.

Can I make this soup in a slow cooker?

Absolutely! To make this soup in a slow cooker, brown the meat on the stovetop first, then transfer it to the slow cooker along with the other ingredients. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours or on high for 3 to 4 hours.

How can I store leftovers?

Leftover soup can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 4 days. For longer storage, freeze the soup for up to 3 months. Thaw in the fridge overnight and reheat on the stovetop or in the microwave before serving.

What can I serve with this soup?

This hearty soup pairs well with crusty bread, a side salad, or a simple sandwich. You can also top the soup with a sprinkle of cheese or a spoonful of sour cream for added richness.

Conclusion

This one-pot unstuffed cabbage soup is a wonderful meal that delivers on both flavor and convenience. With a balance of vegetables, meat, and savory broth, it's perfect for busy weeknights or meal prepping for the week ahead. The flexibility of the recipe allows you to customize it to your taste, making it a go-to for any occasion. Whether you're a fan of traditional stuffed cabbage or just looking for a hearty soup, this recipe is sure to become a staple in your kitchen.

More Recipes Suggestions and Combination

If you enjoyed this unstuffed cabbage soup, here are a few other recipes that pair well or offer similar ease and heartiness:

- **Stuffed Bell Peppers:** Another comforting dish that uses similar ingredients but offers a different presentation.
- **Vegetable Lentil Soup:** A vegetarian option that's equally filling and flavorful, perfect for a meatless Monday.
- **Shepherd's Pie:** A classic dish that layers ground meat with mashed potatoes for a cozy and satisfying meal.
- **Slow Cooker Beef Stew:** If you enjoy one-pot meals, a slow cooker beef stew might be another hit in your kitchen. It's rich, savory, and perfect for cold nights.
- **Cabbage Stir-Fry:** If you have leftover cabbage, a quick stir-fry with garlic, soy sauce, and other vegetables is a great way to use it up.

These recipes not only complement the unstuffed cabbage soup but can also serve as variations or additions to your weekly meal rotation. You can even serve them together at a dinner party for a cozy, family-style meal that is sure to impress.