**Hearty Split Pea Soup With Bacon**

**Recipe from**[**Freemans Restaurant**](https://cooking.nytimes.com/search?q=Freemans+Restaurant&action=click&module=byline&region=recipe%20page)

**Adapted by**[**Florence Fabricant**](https://cooking.nytimes.com/ourcooks/florence-fabricant/my-recipes?action=click&module=byline&region=recipe%20page)

* **YIELD**10 to 12 servings
* **TIME**2 hours

This is a thick, mellow split pea soup with a whisper of meaty smoke and the brambly fragrance of thyme. The recipe is easy and copious, and the soup freezes well. Look for split peas that have a use-by date on the package and are relatively fresh; they will cook faster and better. **—Florence Fabricant**

INGREDIENTS

* **1** **pound slab bacon in 1/4-inch-thick slices**
* **1** **large onion, chopped**
* **1** **carrot, chopped**
* **1** **stalk celery, chopped**
* **1** **head garlic, cloves peeled and sliced thin**
* **Salt and black pepper**
* **1** **pound dried green split peas, rinsed and picked over**
* **4** **bay leaves**
* **2 to 3** **quarts chicken stock**
* **½** **bunch fresh thyme leaves, stripped from stems**

PREPARATION

1. Dice bacon into 1/4-inch cubes. Place in a heavy 6-quart pot over medium-low heat. Cook until fat is rendered and translucent. Add onion, carrot, celery and garlic. Cook until onion and garlic are soft and translucent. Season with salt and pepper.
2. Add split peas, stir to coat with fat, and add bay leaves and 2 quarts stock. Increase heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat so soup simmers. Skim foam that rises to the surface for about 10 minutes, until no more appears. Add thyme leaves. Simmer uncovered about 1 hour or longer, until peas are soft and starting to fall apart. Add more stock, as needed.
3. Remove soup from heat. Add salt and pepper to taste. Purée soup in a food processor in several batches, short of perfect smoothness; you should be able to spoon up some texture. Reheat soup, skimming off any foam. Stir from the bottom to mix well, then ladle into bowls and serve.