

## Split Pea and Ham Hock Soup

- 4 ounces bacon, diced small
- 1 cup small diced onions
- 2 tablespoons minced shallots
- 1/2 cup carrots diced small
- 1/2 cup celery diced small
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 pound of split peas
- 1 ham hock (6 ounces)
- 1 cup of ham steak diced into small cubes (use more if you want a lot of ham)
- Heavy cream
- Fresh black pepper to taste

In a stock pot, render the bacon until crispy, remove the bacon leaving the fat (you won't be using the cooked bacon so pack it up ~~flip it rub it down on no!~~ for another use). Sauté the onions, shallots, carrots, celery and garlic, for 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the stock, peas and ham hock. Bring to a fast boil, and then reduce to a simmer. Cook for 1 hour or until the peas are tender.

Remove the ham hock and dice the meat. Set aside.

Whisk in small amounts of the heavy cream (not too much) to prevent from breaking and simmer for 2 minutes.

With a hand held blender puree the soup until smooth. **Listen up!** *Since I don't have a fancy hand held immersion blender (it's on H's list for me for Christmas though so no worries!) I skipped this step and just left the soup chunky. I didn't mind it a bit chunky and you probably won't either...So if you don't have an immersion blender, it's not too big of a deal to just leave it as-is. However, if you are feeling ambitious enough you can puree batches of it in your food processor or blender.*

Season with pepper (no salt here it is salty enough). Add the diced ham hock and ham steak. Eat it up yum.