

Split Pea Soup

1 pound green split peas, picked over, rinsed, and drained
2 large smoked ham hocks, about 1-1/2 pounds total
1 large onion, chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
1 large carrot, chopped
10 sprigs parsley
4 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
8 cups cold water
1 teaspoon kosher salt plus more
Freshly ground black pepper

In a large soup pot or Dutch oven combine the peas, hocks, onion, celery and carrot. Tie the parsley, thyme, and bay leaf together with kitchen string. Add the herb bundle, water, and salt, bring to a boil over high heat. Lower the heat to a simmer, cover, and cook for 1-1/2 hours or until the peas are tender. Remove the pot from the heat and remove the hocks. Cool. Remove the meat from the hocks, discarding the bones, fat and skin. Cut the meat into cubes. Remove the herb bundle and discard. Puree one half of the soup with a hand held blender, reserving half for texture. Combine pureed and reserved soup and heat the soup to a simmer with the meat and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve in heated bowls with the croutons, if desired.