

Activity: Sister Bean Soup Gift

Background:

The Three Sisters, Corn, Beans, and Squash are staples in many tasty recipes and ingredients. Since the early cultivation of beans thousands of years ago, stews and soups have been a longstanding culinary tradition for Indigenous people across the Americas. It continues to warm the spirits and hearts of families and friends and is a healthy option for the taste palate!

Materials:

- Long, narrow candy bags. Recycled 8-ounce jelly jars with lids can also be used
- Twist ties
- Small measuring cups and spoons
- Assorted dry beans, spread out for easy access
- Assorted dry herbs like parsley, onions, garlic, thyme, basil
- Salt and pepper
- Vegetable bouillon cubes
- Squares of material to top it off
- Recipe cards or paper tags to make labels
- Jute, yarn, or rubber bands to attach labels
- Writing supplies like a pen or permanent markers



Instructions:

1. Into your candy bag, add equal parts of kidney, navy, pinto, lentil, and anasazi (an easy bean to digest), measuring approximately one cup. The assortment can be layered or mixed, depending on aesthetic taste. Substitute your favourite beans for any of the suggested varieties, or any other suitable crops, plants, and/or spices domesticated by Indigenous peoples of the Americas.
2. Next, mix in ½ teaspoon dried parsley, dried onion, dried garlic, thyme, basil, and any other dried herbs to taste. Don't forget to add 1 teaspoon of salt and a dash of pepper. Add 1 bouillon cube to the top of the mix.

3. Secure and close the top of the candy bag with a twist tie or attach the lid if you are working with mason jars. Cover the top with a circle of fabric and fasten it with jute, yarn or a rubber band. Write on the recipe card:

Sister Bean Soup Gift

To: My Friend,

From: Student X

You can list the ingredients and preparation instructions, too.

4. To prepare the soup, soak the dry beans overnight, then simmer the beans in 6 cups of water for a few hours or until tender. Add two cups diced vegetables, such as corn, carrots, celery, broccoli, and potatoes, which help make the beans easier to digest. You can also add cooked cubes of wild meat, chicken, pork, and beef, as well as wild rice.
5. This activity can be easily modified and is suitable for all ages. Teachers and facilitators should be mindful of cross contamination in bulk foods, which might pose a threat to students with food allergies.

Adapted from JoAnne Dennee, Jack Peduzzi and Julia Hand. *In the Three Sisters Garden: Native American Stories and Seasonal Activities for the curious child*. Dublique: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1996.