

## CREAMY DOUBLE PEA SOUP WITH HAM AND CRISPY ONIONS

### INGREDIENTS

2 medium carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces  
2 stalks celery, cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 medium onion, cut into wedges  
3 cloves garlic, peeled and halved  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
6 cups water  
2 thick slices ham-off-the-bone lunch meat, cut into small cubes  
1 cup dried split peas, rinsed and drained  
1/4 teaspoon dried oregano  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
2 10 ounce packages frozen green peas  
1/2 cup heavy cream  
1/3 cup fresh basil leaves, chopped  
salt and pepper to taste  
crispy fried onions (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F. In a shallow baking pan, combine carrots, celery, onion, and garlic together.

Drizzle olive oil and toss them together to coat. Spread them in one layer and roast for about 15 minutes, or until vegetables are light brown on edges, stirring once.

In a large Dutch oven, bring the water to boiling and add the cubed ham and continue to boil for about 10 minutes. Using a netted colander, scoop out the ham from the water, and set aside in a bowl.

Add the roasted vegetables, split peas, oregano, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 40-45 minutes, or until the split peas are softened.

Stir one package frozen peas and basil into Dutch oven. Cool slightly. Transfer vegetable mixture, half at a time, to a food processor or a blender. Cover and process or blend until nearly smooth. Return pureed mixture back into Dutch oven. Add in other package of frozen peas. Stir in cream.

Stir the cooked ham in the pureed soup. Season with salt and pepper and serve, topped with about one tablespoon crispy onions, if desired.