

SUNDAY EDIT



Nataša Mandić/Stocksy

Is Souping the New Juicing? I Decided to Investigate



[Iman Balagam](#)

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Recently, there has been an uptick in “souping” as a way to slim down thanks to soup’s low-calorie count. Is souping the new juicing, we wonder? We saw how juicing turned out – chains popping up only to find out that it is not as good for our health as we thought it was ([too much sugar](#)).

But is soup different? In fact, companies like [Soupelina](#) and [Splendid Spoon](#) make this process easy by allowing you to order high-quality soups to your door. You can find grab-and-go soups, like [Skinny Souping](#) or [Juice Press](#) in the refrigerated section of some grocery stores or gyms. And you can purchase a monthly subscription from [Daily Harvest](#) that comes frozen. The flavors – like carrot ginger or mushroom miso – are not your mama’s chicken noodle.

Souping intrigued me because there is no official rulebook. Replacing one or two full meals in a day with a lower calorie soup sounds doable. It actually makes deciding what I am eating for lunch each day much easier – and the meal prep! Soup is a relatively easy meal to make, you can simmer up a lot in one pot, and then freeze the rest for easy-to-access meals to take to the office for lunch or reheat in a pinch after work.

Instead of making my own, I tried a variety of soups from [Skinny Souping’s](#) collection (Signature Skinny Cleanse – from \$200). These grab-n-go soups combine flavored alkaline water and carefully crafted soup blends. The best part is that fiber is maintained in the souping process and they do not promote a spike in blood sugar. Fiber supports detoxification, keeps your digestive system on track and prevents bloating and constipation. “Soup allows you to have good sources of all three macronutrients – [protein](#), carbs and fat – in one meal,” says Laura Cipullo, R.D., owner of the New York City-based practice [Laura Cipullo Whole Nutrition](#).

On day one of my new undertakings, I heat up my tomato and ancient grain soup for lunch, and I quickly realize that “healthy” soup is very different than the creamy tomato soup I usually get when I am having an off day. This watery concoction is good but not as filling as I would have liked. To the dismay of my editor, I accompany my soup with a granola bar. Girl’s gotta chew!

The next day my mood is completely off, and I mend the sadness the only way I know how – pasta! I decide to forego the soup for lunch and decide to have it for dinner. I enjoy the flexibility the souping lifestyle allows for.

It is day three and I throw some crushed-up tortilla chips into my bowl. Sure, I may be diluting the health benefits but at least I can get some CRUNCH.

This cycle continues (I skipped a day due to a strong desire for solid food) until I finish my six jars of soup. By the end, I have a deeper appreciation for whole foods and the simple act of chewing my meals. And, while I have not noticed a major difference in my body, this is most likely due to the fact that no major change happens with six jars of soup. While I would not consider this to be a cleanse, souping is a great place to jumpstart a healthier lifestyle. “There’s no harm in souping for a day or two and eating healthy soups filled with veggies and lean protein,” says Barbara Melendi, a Chicago-area registered dietitian.

Even with the slew of benefits, this endeavor was an exercise in restraint for me. It is clear that when it comes to soup, there are a few mistakes that experts often see.

“Your goal should be to find a meal that satisfies and satiates you. Ask yourself: *Will soup do that for me?*” says Cipullo. If the answer is yes, then we have a few tips to help guide you to the right option.

First, choose whether or not you are going for broth, puree or chunky soup (like vegetable or lentil, for instance). All can be healthy. For instance, purees may get a bad rap (they are creamy!), but this silky texture often comes from veggies and broth blended together (think pureed butternut squash, black bean or cauliflower soup). If you are on the keto diet, you will want to choose one made with avocado, cheese or cream base and avoid those that contain potatoes, rice, pasta or certain veggies like carrots or corn. If you are not on keto, beware that creamier or butter-laced soups, like those with “chowder” or “bisque” in their name, can pack a lot of calories and **saturated fat**. Higher calorie soup can have a place in your diet, says Melendi, but know what your health goals are can help you make the best choice for you.

Do not be afraid to open yourself up to different ways to fit soup into your day. For instance, miso soup is routinely eaten for breakfast in Japan. It may

be hot in the summer in Spain, but that is where chilled gazpacho comes in. In addition, Cipullo says that many clients love bone broth as an afternoon snack. Bone broth contains collagen and is packed with protein (one cup of Kettle & Fire chicken bone broth has 10 grams of protein per cup). Because collagen is the building block of skin and hair, there is [some evidence](#) to show that supplementing your diet with collagen for eight weeks can improve skin hydration, something that delivers a youth-boost to your complexion. And let's not forget that it is tasty, too. Who knew a humble bowl of soup could do so much?

What are the Pros?

Soups are a great vehicle for fiber-rich veggies that you may not be eating otherwise, helping you pack more into your day. And let's not forget that fiber — something that [most Americans](#) fall drastically short on — helps protect against heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer, [according to a new study](#) in the journal *The Lancet*. It is the ultimate lazy girl's meal prep. To get started, find healthy recipes on favorite blogs like [Ambitious Kitchen](#), [Fit Foodie Finds](#) and [Cait's Plate](#).

What's more, soup is particularly filling. Past research has shown that when people ate a broth-based soup as an app, they consumed 20 percent fewer calories from their entree (compared to those in a no soup group), per a study in the journal *Appetite*. As the researchers point out, soups slow digestion to help you feel full. [Later research in 2013](#) backed that up, showing that the unique texture of soup — in this case, a smooth soup — boosts fullness more than eating a regular solid food meal because it slows "gastric emptying" or the rate at which food moves out of your stomach. Your gut communicates with your brain to say "I've had enough" to keep snacking at bay.

A good place for souping might be to jumpstart a new healthy lifestyle, says Melendi. "There's no harm in souping for a day or two and eating healthy soups filled with veggies and lean protein," she says. Keep your expectations in check, though.

What are the Cons?

One downside is that soups, especially if you are buying canned soup, are often high in sodium, something that can cause bloating issues, says Cipullo. Always check the nutrient label — those that contain more than 20 percent of the DV for sodium are considered “high sodium.” When possible, choose fresh or frozen soups over canned, and reduced or low sodium versions if canned.

So what’s the bottom line?

You do not need to soup to cleanse. You have organs whose function is to detox, and these include your kidneys and liver. “In a normal, healthy individual, your body is incredibly efficient in doing this,” says Melendi.

If you are looking to lose weight, the key is to do small, sustainable changes to your diet that can last a lifetime, says Cipullo. There is absolutely nothing wrong with eating soup daily because you love it, of course, but check your intentions. “I don’t think that detoxing with soup will give you the payoff you’re looking for — especially long-term,” says Melendi. For one, calorie restriction in this way may help your body release water weight, and you may see the scale temporarily dip down. However, when done over a longer period of time, your metabolism may slow in order to conserve energy. “When you stop the diet and introduce back a normal amount of calories, your body isn’t prepared,” says Melendi. The end result can be weight gain.

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