

# A Tale of the Stone Soup



Once there was an old man who had been traveling for a long time. He was poor and had no money or food. When he came to a village, he began to go from door to door to see if someone had food to spare. But wherever he went, the people said they had nothing to give and sent him away.



When he came to the last house, the man of the house jeered and said, "All I have to give you is water."

"Oh, thank you," the old man said with great enthusiasm. "I can make some stone soup with that water." The man from the village shook his head at him, but because he was curious about this stranger and his stone soup, he gave him a big pot of water.



The old man sang a merry tune as he built a small fire and set the pot upon it. He took a small, round stone out of his pocket and ceremoniously placed it in the pot. After a while a passerby stopped beside him and asked what he was doing there.

"Oh, I'm making stone soup. Would you like some when it's ready?"

"What does it taste like?" asked the villager.

"Well, not bad, but it would taste a lot better if it had an onion in it." The villager said he had one onion he could put in it, if that was all the old man wanted of him. He gave an onion, and into the pot it went. Pretty soon another villager came and asked about the soup. When he asked what stone soup tasted like, the old man replied, "Well, not bad, but it would taste a lot better if it had a potato in it." This villager had a potato, if that was all he wanted. So, a potato went into the pot. Since news travels pretty fast in a small village, it was not long before a carrot went into the pot, if that was all he wanted. Another brought a tomato, and one after another, the whole village added one vegetable each.

Finally, when the soup was ready, the whole village was invited to eat. And eat they did – as much as they wanted. The old man, who had eaten his fill too, was careful, however, to retrieve the stone from the pot and put it back into his pocket for another day.

*As retold by Marsha Post*

