

# Stone Soup

## Folk Story

Once upon a time a traveler arrived at a small village. The man was tired and hungry but didn't have a thing to eat. The people of the village were poor and did not have any food to give him. The traveler set his pack in a corner. He picked up a stone from the ground and said to the villagers, "Since you don't have anything to eat, bring me a pot so that I can make soup from this stone."

The villagers said with surprise, "Stone soup? What type of soup is this?"

The traveler said, "Wait and see."

One person went and brought a pot from home and the traveler started a fire in the village square. He placed the pot on the fire and poured water into it. He washed the stone and threw it in the pot.

The townspeople had collected around the square and were watching the traveler with interest. He took a ladle out from his pack and stirred the water in the pot. He tasted a bit of it and said, "What good soup! If only we had a bit of meat. Then it could get no better!"

Someone from the middle of the townspeople said, "I have a little meat at home" and he went and brought the meat.

The traveler dumped the meat into the pot. He again stirred it and tasted a little. The townspeople asked, "Well, how does it taste?"

The traveler said, "It's really good. It's too bad it does not have onions or greens. If it had onions and greens it would be a lot better."

Someone said, "It's possible I have some greens at home." Someone else said, "It's possible I have some onions."

The two people left and returned with a basket of greens and several onions. The traveler poured the onions and greens into the pot and stirred it again. He tasted it and said, "What good food it has become!"

If I had poured in some lentils and beans it would have been unmentionably good!"

The townspeople looked at each other. Someone said, "A handful of lentils and beans could be found at our house" and he went and brought back lentils and beans.

The traveler poured the lentils and beans into the pot, stirred it, gave it a taste and said, "Now all of you must stir the soup once."

The townspeople lined up and one by one they all stirred the soup.

The traveler said, "The soup is ready. Bring your plates so that I can give you soup that is usually only eaten in the houses of governors and kings.

The people were eating the soup and saying, "We didn't know that one could make soup this tasty with a stone."

The traveler was smiling as he took the stone from the pot and said, "Keep this stone and use it again to make soup. But remember, make it in the town square and prepare it together."

Translation by Larry Klein