I am consistently searching for easy and healthy recipes for both myself and the kids. Being able to feed my children with solid nutritional meals is extremely important to me as I want to teach them that good nutrition does not necessarily mean you have to sacrifice taste. Sure, a fast food meal comes our way once in a while, but again I try to teach them moderation. Here are a few recipes that we enjoy, and I think you'll be surprised at just how easy they are to make.

Coq Au Vin

Ingredients:

- 3 lbs boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup white wine
- 8 white onions, sliced
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small can of tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme
- 3 teaspoons dried basil
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 cup water

2 chicken bouillon cubes
1 ½ teaspoon black pepper

Directions:

1.) Place cut chicken in a large pot, preferably a 4-quart.
2.) Add the wine, onions, garlic, tomato paste, thyme, basil, mushrooms, bouillon cubes, pepper, and water.
3.) Cook, covered, for 1 ½ hours over medium heat.
4.) Uncover and add water if necessary. If too thin, let cook another half hour or so. When you stir it, the liquid should be clinging to the onion/chicken mixture.

Apricot Lentil Soup

Ingredients:

1/8 cup olive oil
2 onions, chopped
3 to 4 cloves garlic, minced
½ cup dried apricots
2-1/2 cups lentils (about 1 package worth)
8 cups chicken stock (or 8 cups water and 8 chicken bouillon cubes)
5 roma (plum) tomatoes, chopped
¾ teaspoon ground cumin
¾ teaspoon dried thyme
Salt to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
3 to 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice, to taste

Directions:

1.) Sauté onion, garlic, and apricots in olive oil until the onions are cooked through. Add the lentils and stock. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes.
2.) Stir in the tomatoes, and season with cumin, thyme, salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for 10 more minutes.
3.) Stir in lemon juice. Puree ½ of the soup in a blender, and then return to the pot. Serve.

Gazpacho

Ingredients:

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup red wine vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- 1/8 teaspoon Tabasco sauce
- 4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
- 4 cups (32 oz/900 g) canned plum tomatoes
- 1 medium green bell pepper, sliced
- 1 medium cucumber, sliced
- ½ medium yellow onion, sliced

Directions:

Combine the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, salt, cumin, and Tabasco sauce in a food processor with half of the vegetables listed and purée. Transfer the soup mixture to a large bowl and purée the remaining vegetables. Add the pureed mixture to the soup bowl and taste. Add additional salt if necessary. Refrigerate until very cool, or overnight.

Before serving, garnish with chopped tomatoes, croutons, and hard-cooked eggs.