With the strident arrival of fall, it's time for hearty, savory soups and stews that combine all your favorite flavors in one big, satisfying bowl. This Thai-spiced stew is perfect for chilly nights spent planning your Halloween costume.

Serves 6

What You Need:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, quartered and thinly sliced
4 to 6 cloves garlic, minced
3 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
3 cups water
1 medium green or red bell pepper, cut into narrow strips
1-1/2 cups frozen green beans
1/2 teaspoon red or green curry paste
1 tablespoon natural granulated sugar
2 teaspoons minced fresh ginger
2 stalks lemongrass
One 13.5-ounce can light coconut milk
2 tablespoons natural peanut butter
Salt to taste

What You Do:

1. In a soup pot over medium-low heat, heat the oil. Add onion and sauté until translucent. Add garlic and continue to sauté until both are golden. Add sweet potatoes and water. Bring to a rapid simmer, then lower the heat. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes are about half done.

2. Add bell pepper, green beans, curry paste, sugar, and ginger. Cut each lemongrass stalk into 3 or 4 pieces, and bruise by making long cuts throughout with a sharp knife. Stir into the soup pot. Simmer stew for 10 minutes longer.

3. Stir in the coconut milk, peanut butter, and salt. Return to a simmer, then cook over very low heat for another 10 minutes or until all the vegetables are tender and the flavors are well integrated. Remove lemongrass pieces. Taste to adjust seasonings, and serve at once.