

PORTABLE SOUP

from Valerie Mars

Contemporary with David Potter's earliest recipes for pocket soup (*PPC 76*), this speech in Philip Massinger's play *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, suggests a similarly reduced broth. The play is presumed to have been written around 1625 and first published in 1633. In this scene (Act II, scene 2), the cook, Furnace, offers the escaping hero, Alworth, this:

Here; drink it off, the ingredients are cordial,
And this is the true elixir; it hath boil'd
Since midnight for you. 'Tis the quintessence
Of five cocks of game ten dozen sparrows,
Knuckles of veal, potato roots, and marrow;
Coral, and ambergris: were you two years elder,
And I had a wife, or gamesome mistress,
I durst trust you with neither: you need not bait
After this I warrant you, though your journey's long,
You may ride on the strength of this till tomorrow morning.

Massinger may, in part, have taken the choice of some of the ingredients, such as coral, from the realms of alchemic distillation but the recipe also includes plenty of meat and game giving it a condensed strength, similar to that of a pocket soup.

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