



February 24, 2016

Easy Weeknight Soups

Often, soups seem like they have to be an all-day, slow-simmering affair, but in reality, you are less than an hour away from some weeknight comfort.

Make a trip to the Asian grocery store for the ingredients in our quick Pork Dumpling Soup, which is a snap when you buy pre-made pork dumplings (or know someone who will make them from scratch!) Ginger, garlic, lime and lemongrass are simmered in chicken broth to create an aromatic base for the dumplings, bok choy, bean sprouts, oyster mushrooms and green onion.

Our Greek Chicken and Rice Soup is inspired by the bright flavours of avgolemono. The soup starts with a quick broth made with chicken thighs and mirepoix, with just a hint of lemon. The thighs are then removed as the broth is used to cook rice. Finally, the shredded chicken meat is returned to the pot, along with lemon zest and parsley. Serve with a simple Greek salad with cucumber, tomato, peppers, olives and feta. Voilà! Dinner is served.

PORK DUMPLING SOUP

Ingredients:

- 4 cups no-salt-added chicken broth
- 4 slices fresh ginger, 1/8 inch thick
- 3 cloves garlic, bruised
- 3 lime leaves or 1 1/2 tsp grated lime peel
- 1 piece lemon grass stalk (3 inch), bruised
- 8 fresh or frozen Pork Dumplings
- 2 cups roughly chopped baby bok choy
- 1/2 cup bean sprouts
- 1/2 cup sliced oyster mushrooms
- 1 tbsp thinly sliced green onion

Method:

1. Combine broth, ginger, garlic, lime leaves and lemon grass in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 20 minutes. Remove from heat.
3. Strain broth mixture through a sieve into a heatproof bowl; discard solids.
4. Return broth to saucepan. Bring to a boil.
5. Reduce heat to a simmer and add dumplings; cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until dumplings are cooked through, about 5 minutes.
6. Add bok choy, bean sprouts, mushrooms and green onion; cook, stirring, until vegetables are heated through. Serve immediately. *Serves 4 as a starter.*

Cook's Note: Lime leaves are dark green and uniquely shaped. A single leaf looks like two leaves attached together. They can be found fresh, frozen or dried. Look for them in the produce section of large grocery stores or in Asian grocery stores.

Oyster mushrooms are fan-shaped and grow in groupings. Look for them in the produce section of large grocery stores or specialty food stores.

GREEK CHICKEN AND RICE SOUP

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1/2 cup diced carrot
- 1/2 cup diced celery
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp oregano, crumbled
- 1 lb (0.5 kg) boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 8 cups water
- 1 cup long grain white rice
- 3 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tsp grated lemon peel



- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp freshly ground pepper

Method:

1. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, carrot and celery; sauté until vegetables are softened, about 4 - 5 minutes.
2. Add garlic and oregano; cook, stirring, for 1 minute.
3. Add chicken and water; stir to combine. Bring to a boil.
4. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until chicken is tender and cooked through, about 20 - 30 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken to a cutting board; reserve mixture in Dutch oven. When cool enough to handle, use two forks to shred chicken; set aside.
6. Return Dutch oven to medium heat. Add rice and lemon juice; stir to combine. Bring to a boil.
7. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender, about 25 minutes.
8. Add shredded chicken, parsley, lemon peel, salt and pepper; cook, stirring, until combined and chicken is heated through. As the rice absorbs liquid, this soup is best served immediately. *Serves 5.*