

## LATE SUMMER CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE SOUP WITH RICE

8 servings

This soup uses both dried and fresh herbs--a boon for the late summer herb gardener. If you've no fresh, I give dried substitutions, but do please add a big handful of chopped fresh parsley in with the rice. Use it for garnish as well. The variety of allium vegetables (onions, shallots, etc.) makes this soup something very special, summery, and extraordinarily fragrant, but if you've only onions and garlic in the kitchen, use 2 large onions and 2 large cloves of garlic for a soup that will still be happily tasty.

- 1 tablespoon salted butter
- 2 tablespoons neutral oil, such as canola or grape seed
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced into 1/2 - 1-inch pieces
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon **each**: dried thyme, dill, and tarragon
- 1 small yellow onion, diced
- 1 shallot, diced
- 1 large leek (white and light green parts only), sliced and diced
- 2 **each**: sliced into 1/4-inch thick pieces: medium peeled/trimmed carrot and trimmed celery stalk
- 1 small parsnip, trimmed, peeled, and sliced thinly
- 1 small fennel bulb, cored and sliced thinly
- 1 small, plump garlic clove: minced or grated
- 3 quarts homemade chicken broth (recipe below) or purchased low-sodium chicken broth
- 1/3 cup uncooked white rice\*
- 1 small or medium zucchini, diced into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped (can sub 1 1/2 teaspoons dried) plus extra for garnish
- 1 tablespoon each: chopped fresh thyme and tarragon (can sub 1 1/2 teaspoons dried each) plus extra for garnish
- Sliced scallions, for garnish

In a 10-quart soup pot, heat butter and oil over medium-high flame for a minute. Add chicken and let cook two minutes or until beginning to brown. Sprinkle with 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt, 1/2 teaspoon pepper, and dried herbs. Stir and add onion and shallot. Let cook another minute or two; tip in leeks, carrots, celery, parsnip, and fennel. Cook, stirring 3 or 4 more minutes, adding garlic for the last minute. Pour in broth; bring to a boil. Add rice, zucchini, and fresh herbs. Reduce heat to simmer, cover, and let cook 20 minutes OR until rice and vegetables are tender. Don't overcook. Taste and adjust seasonings. Serve hot garnished with reserved fresh herbs and sliced scallions.

\*Sub brown rice for white rice, but pre cook it for at least a half hour or even add it totally cooked at the end if you've a bowl full in your fridge.

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## **HOMEMADE CHICKEN BROTH** makes about 3 quarts

*I save chicken backs, wing tips, necks, and all of the giblets (heart, gizzard--use the liver for something else -- I fry it up for the dog or save them for paté) in a large freezer bag, adding to it as I have more. When there's a gallon bag full (2-3 chicken's worth of extras), I make broth. Occasionally I'll use a whole chicken, but that's a rarity at my house. I also save ends of leeks, onions, parsnips, carrots, fennel tops, mushrooms, etc. in a separate freezer bag and use those in the broth. If you haven't any saved bits and pieces, whole fresh vegetables will do, of course. Don't peel the onions, etc., just wash them thoroughly before adding to the pot. Some people add white wine to their broth; I add wine to soup as I make it if I'm using it.*

Cover the chicken pieces and giblets with about 4 quarts of water in a 10 or 12 quart pot. Your chicken bits and vegetables should be covered at least by a couple of inches and you still might need to add more water as it cooks. Sprinkle with 2 teaspoons of salt and a tablespoon of whole peppercorns. Toss in an onion, a stalk of celery including leaves, an unpeeled, untrimmed carrot, and a small sliced parsnip or 2-3 cups saved odds and ends of vegetables. (No cruciferous vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, etc.) Toss in a handful or two of unchopped fresh herbs: I like parsley, fresh dill, rosemary, thyme, and mint. If you only have parsley, so be it; add a cup or so. Add a bay leaf. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer and let cook 3 hours or more, skimming the foam off the top as needed. Strain well through a fine mesh strainer into another pot, and let the broth cool a bit. \*Taste and adjust seasonings. Carefully spoon off at least half of the fat off the top before using. Don't take it all off; it adds enormous flavor, color, and energy. Let cool totally (or cool it in an ice water bath) and refrigerate up to 3 days if not using immediately. Freeze for 6 months.

\*If you'd like, pull off the tender dark strands of chicken meat off the neck, being very careful to avoid the tiny neck bones, and use them in the soup or for a snack. For a stronger and quite tasty, but less clear soup, you can pick out the very tender vegetables, purée them, and add them back into the broth.

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