Kimchi-Kale-Chicken Soup

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

1 Chicken thigh or breast (ideally use a drumstick with the bone still in.)
2 cloves of garlic, roughly chopped
1/2 inch fresh ginger root, thinly sliced
3-4 leaves of curly kale, chopped
4-5 fresh or reconstituted shittake mushrooms, sliced
2 carrots, sliced
1 lemon
1 cup of cooked rice (I use a wild and brown mix)
2-3 tablespoons of soy sauce (or to taste)
2 tablespoons sesame oil
healthy dash of fresh ground black pepper
2 tablespoons Miso (soybean) paste
1 tablespoon Korean red hot pepper paste
1/2 cup napa (cabbage) kimchi, chopped (you can get a small jar of it from many mainstream grocery stores. It probably won't taste very good but I use it in a pinch.)
1/3 cup brine from the kimchi
4-6 cups of water (less water will make for a stewier soup.)

Instructions

Place chicken, roughly chopped garlic cloves, ginger, and at least 4 cups of water into a pot (I use a sauce pot when I'm cooking for one person.) Squeeze the lemon juice into the pot. Add pepper. The stove should be on high, setting your pot to boil.

Add in all other ingredients, and let the pot boil. I generally add another few cup of

water, as the soup boils down. I let the soup boil until the miso, hot pepper and rice have a chance to create a nice glutinous soup stock, and the pieces of kimchi are almost translucent. The nice green color of the kale will fade, but even with boiling, the kale will remain crunchy. If you don't like your kale a little tough, I suggest brining it before you start the soup (boiling it in salt water for a few minutes.)

I don't generally time how long I get the soup boil for, but about 30-40 minutes should be enough. Again, this is homestyle, and Korean cuisine (at least the way my grandmother makes it) relies more on tasting thoroughout the cooking process that set amounts of time.

Serve hot, with a very cold glass of water or barley tea. You will sweat buckets while eating this, and you might upset some with the pungent garlic-y smell, but it's worth it - it's for your health! I've found this soup and eating kimchi will help vigorously chase the common cold, or whenever your immune system needs a kick in the butt. Kimchi is actually probiotic, much like kombucha.

Please note that this is a *very* home style recipe. This is my personal, thrown-together soup recipe that approximates something called kimchi-chegae (sp?) which is a kimchi stew, usually served with pork or beef, not chicken.

If you're a vegetarian or vegan - just leave out the chicken.