

Chicken Noodle Soup with Cabbage, Dill and Lots of Lemon

Serves 4-6

Among all the ways that soup can be exciting, sometimes all you want is for soup to be whatever the opposite of that is. Comforting. Calming. Soothing. Basic. Expected. Frankly, I don't want any surprises from my chicken noodle soup. I want tender, puffy, nearly overcooked noodles swimming in a savory, golden broth, lightly sweetened from little coins of carrots or leaves of torn up cabbage. I want lots of dill floating on top of a thin layer of chicken fat, I want perfectly cooked shredded bits of chicken throughout, I want it pleasantly sour from tons of lemon, and I want it to make me feel better, even if I'm not all that sick.

It goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) that this soup will only be as good as your broth, and this recipe alone is worth the hours of simmering that it takes to make your own. If you were waiting for a sign to make a batch of chicken broth, consider this that sign.

Ingredients

12 cups Chicken Broth, the Long Way (plus any meat)

Kosher salt

Freshly ground black pepper

4 ounces bowtie pasta, egg noodles or other small pasta noodle shape

½ head savoy cabbage, torn into bite-sized pieces

6 stalks celery (plus leaves), thinly sliced

1 teaspoon fish sauce, plus more (optional)

1 cup dill, tender leaves and stems, finely chopped

½ bunch chives or a few stalks green garlic or a few ramps, thinly sliced

2 lemons, halved for squeezing

Saltine crackers, for serving (optional)

Preparation

1. Cook the noodles in a large pot of salted boiling water until just before al dente (if using egg noodles, this will happen faster than pasta, around 4 or 5 minutes). Drain and set aside.
2. Bring the chicken broth to a simmer in a large pot. Add the pasta, cabbage, celery and fish sauce, if using, and bring to a simmer. Cook gently until cabbage is just wilted but still has some nice bite, five or so minutes.
3. Add the dill, chives and any garlicky things to the broth. Bring to a simmer and season again with salt, lots and lots of pepper, and a dash more fish sauce if you like. Add the lemon juice and remove from heat.
4. To serve, divide among bowls, maybe serving with saltines on the side and more herbs on top.

DO AHEAD: Chicken soup can be made 3 days ahead, stored in the refrigerator. Sans noodles, it can be made and frozen up to 3 months ahead (simply reheat and add the noodles when you're ready to eat).