

CHICKEN MATZO BALL SOUP

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Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken approximately 3 1/2 pounds
- 1 pound short ribs (optional)
- 4 large carrots
- 4 celery stalks
- 1 whole onion
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- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 Small bunch of fresh parsley
- 1 Small bunch of fresh dill
- 1 bag of egg noodles

In a large stockpot, place the whole chicken. To add more flavor, I typically add the neck bone, but don't add the liver, it will make the soup bitter.

My mother always added short ribs to her chicken soup. Back then, short ribs were not as trendy as they are today...and we called it "flanken," but this meat added another layer of flavor to her special soup. Add the short ribs (optional) and pour in enough water making sure the chicken and meat are covered by at least an inch or two.



Cook over medium heat until the soup comes to a slow boil. Lower the heat to medium low and simmer for approximately 1 hour. If you allow the broth to boil hard, the soup will become cloudy. After 1 hour, there will be impurities that rise to the surface. With a slotted spoon, skim the impurities into a small bowl and toss. Add water if necessary to keep the chicken completely covered.

I like to add my vegetables after cleaning the impurities from the soup. Once the broth is cleaned, add the whole carrots, celery stalks, parsley and whole onion. At this time I add salt to the broth. I begin with about a teaspoon or two, depending upon how large a pot you have.

Cover and cook on medium low heat for approximately another hour. While the broth is cooking, prepare the noodles and matzo balls.

In a separate pot of boiling water, cook the egg noodles according to directions on the package. Drain and set aside.

For the matzo balls, I prefer to use a matzo ball mix. It tastes exactly the same as using matzo meal and adding the additional ingredients, and I find that it is easier and readily available.

Ingredients:

- 1 package Matzo Ball Mix
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 bouillon cube (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Break 2 eggs into a medium bowl. Add the vegetable oil and mix gently with a fork. Do not whip. Add the contents of one bag of the matzo ball mix and gently mix. Cover with a piece of plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes making sure the plastic wrap is touching the mixture to prevent the batter from forming a crust.

In a large pot with a tight-fitting lid, bring 3 quarts of water to a boil with 2 teaspoons salt and a bouillon cube. To add another layer of flavor to the matzo balls, I like to season the water so feel free to add an additional bouillon cube or other available chicken enhanced flavor packet.

Using wet hands, form small balls from the matzo meal batter, each about the size of a grape or walnut, depending on the size of matzo balls you prefer. Mama Marko is using a small ice cream scoop to keep them small and consistent in size. Matzo balls swell as they absorb the water in which they are cooking. Once the water boils, reduce heat and bring to a simmer.

Add the matzo balls, cover the pot and cook for 30 to 35 minutes. When chicken is done, carefully remove the chicken, short ribs and vegetables to a cutting board. When cool enough to handle, discard the skin and bones and shred the meat into portion size pieces. Discard the whole onion and cut the carrots and celery into serving size pieces.

Carefully strain the stock through a sieve into another pot. To serve the soup immediately, place a few pieces of chicken, meat, carrots and celery into a bowl. Add noodles and several matzo balls and cover with broth. Top with a sprig of fresh dill or a teaspoon of finely chopped dill.

If you have leftover broth, freeze in containers. The next time you need chicken broth for a recipe, you now have homemade stock.