

Lentil Chicken Soup

<http://userealbutter.com/2018/10/22/lentil-chicken-soup-recipe/>
from *The Kitchn*

2 lbs. chicken drumsticks or bone-in chicken thighs*
12 cups water*
1 medium yellow onion, 1/4-inch dice
3 large carrots, 1/2-inch dice
3 ribs celery, 1/2-inch dice
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbsps tomato paste
3 tbsps olive oil
salt to taste
freshly ground black pepper to taste
2 cups French green lentils, picked over for rocks, and rinsed

*If you don't want to bother with making your own chicken broth you can substitute a pound of cooked, shredded chicken meat and 12 cups of chicken broth for the the 2 pounds of raw chicken and the 12 cups of water. This will save the bulk of the time in making this recipe.

If making your own chicken broth – conventional method: Place the chicken and the water in a large stock pot over high heat. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and partially cover. Cook for 3-4 hours.

If making your own chicken broth – pressure cooker method: Place the chicken and the cold water in the pressure cooker. Seal and set pressure cooker to high (on my Fagor Duo 8 quart, this is setting 2). Set over high heat. When the pressure cooker achieves pressure (the button goes up on the Fagor Duo), let cook for 15 minutes. Turn off heat and allow natural decompression (can take as long as an hour).

For both methods of chicken broth: Strain the broth of the solids. Remove the skin and bones from the chicken and shred the meat. To de-fat the broth, you can chill it completely and scrape any solid fat from the top. For a faster method, fill a gallon ziploc bag 3/4 full of warm (or hot – but not too hot) broth and seal. Point one of the bottom corners down into a clean vessel (like a stock pot – something big). Use a sharp knife and cut a slit in the bottom corner of the ziploc and let the broth drain into the vessel. As the fat layer approaches the corner, pinch off the corner before the fat can empty into the vessel. Discard the bag and the fat.

Make the soup: Heat the olive oil in a large stock pot over medium high heat. When the oil is hot, sauté the onions, carrots, celery, and garlic until soft (about 10 minutes). Season with salt and pepper. Stir in the tomato paste until all of the vegetables are coated. Cook until the paste begins to stick to the bottom of the pot (a couple of minutes). Add the lentils and broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the broth to a simmer and cook covered for an hour. If you want a thicker soup, you can purée half of the soup with an immersion blender or by scooping it into a blender or food processor to purée and returning it to the soup. Stir the chicken meat into the soup and season with salt and pepper to taste. Serves 8-10.