

Asian Sausage & Spinach Soup



I've recently acquired a taste for Vietnamese cuisine, especially "Pho". The broth of this soup is incredible but it takes hours to make. I incorporated some of the spices used in "Pho" to enhance the flavors in this healthy weeknight soup to give it an incredibly rich and fragrant taste. This gluten-free soup is full of rich tastes, from the savory broth, to the spicy sausage, the bite of the barley and the creamy cannellini beans.

Makes 4 main servings or 8 first course servings

Ingredients

- 1 TBS Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- 1 Medium Yellow Onion (diced)
- 1 lb Chicken Sausage (sliced thinly) *
- 64 oz Low-Sodium Chicken Broth
- ½ C Pearl Barley
- 16 oz Fresh Spinach (cleaned)
- 1 14 oz can Cannellini Beans (drained) *



*Bouquet-Garni **

8" Square Cheese Cloth Doubled
String

1 Star Anise Pod

1 Stick Cinnamon (broken in half)

3 Whole Cloves

8 Black Pepper Corns

Directions

Put 1 tablespoon of olive oil in a large Dutch oven and heat over medium heat. Add the diced onion to the heated oil and sauté for 3-5 minutes, or until the onions are translucent. Add the sliced sausage and continue to sauté for 5 minutes. Add the chicken broth and bring up to a rolling boil.



While the broth is heating prepare the bouquet-garni. Place the star anise, cinnamon, cloves and peppercorns in the middle of a double layer of cheese cloth. Close it into a sachet and tie with a string (see photo). Place it in the heating chicken broth.

Once the broth has reached a rolling boil add the barley and reduce the heat to medium low. Cover and cook for 40 minutes.

Remove the bouquet-garni and add the spinach and cannellini beans. Raise heat to medium high and cook for an additional 5 minutes. Taste to make sure the barley is cooked. Adjust the salt and pepper as needed.

*** Pronto Substitutes**

Chicken Sausage – use can use any variety of chicken sausage in this soup. I used an Asiago chicken sausage or you can use chicken or turkey Italian sausage. The choice is yours.

Bouquet-Garni - A group of herbs tied together in a cheese cloth bag for the purpose of cooking them with an item to season which makes it easy to remove them when they are done.

Cannellini Beans – you can substitute navy or white kidney beans

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