

FAVORITE CHICKEN AND DUMPLINGS

Chicken Preparation:

1 4 lb. broiler or roasting chicken
2 quarts water or chicken broth
1 teaspoon bouillon powder
2 tablespoons fresh parsley
1 onion, whole
1 bay leaf (optional)
2-3 cloves garlic, crushed
pinch of black pepper
1/2 lb. baby carrots
1 or 2 tablespoons butter
2-3 stalks celery, whole, plus leaves

Wash chicken, inside and out. Place in a large enough pot to cover with about 2 quarts of water or chicken broth and bouillon powder (a bouillon cube or soup base may be substituted. Add celery, a bay leaf (optional), parsley, pepper, onion and garlic. Bring the pot to a boil and then reduce heat immediately to low; simmer for 60-90 minutes until chicken is very tender.

Remove chicken from the broth and set on a dish to cool. Add the baby carrots to the broth and cook carrots on medium until tender (about 15-20 minutes). Remove carrots using a slotted spoon and set aside. Continue to simmer the broth over low heat while preparing the dumplings.

When chicken becomes cool enough to handle, cut into bite size pieces, removing bones and skin. Set de-boned chicken aside.

Dumplings:

2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/3 teaspoon baking soda
1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
2 tablespoons cold butter
1 cup buttermilk

In a medium bowl, combine flour, salt, baking powder and baking soda, mixing well. Cut in shortening using a pastry blender or a large fork (pastry makers mix in the shortening using their hands - if you want to try, dip your hands in ice cold water for a minute, then dry your hands first; it's important not to melt the butter!)

Cooks Note: Butter is the shortening used in this recipe.

Add cold buttermilk, a few spoons at a time, mixing the dough from the outside in with fork until a soft dough forms (do not overmix - about 2 minutes total). You may need to add a small amount of buttermilk or flour to adjust the consistency of the dough due to flour storage conditions or humidity in the environment. Add liquid if the dough is very dry and crumbly after it has been mixed; add flour if the dough is very sticky.

Roll dough out on a work surface which has been lightly sprinkled with flour to prevent sticking. Roll dough out thinly, about 1/8" thick, then slice into strips, each about 2 inches in length.

Gently drop the dumplings into the simmering chicken broth. Stir them gently to prevent sticking. Add chicken, pepper and butter and simmer for another 10 minutes or so before serving.

Serve with the carrots on the side and sprinkle the chicken and dumplings with a bit of chopped parsley, if desired.

Variations: Add 1/4 teaspoon each of rubbed sage and/or onion powder to chicken broth for added flavor. Sometimes we serve this with sliced mushrooms, too. Simply add them to the broth during the last 10 minutes.

This dish will become your family's favorite comfort food and is just as well received when guests arrive.