

Lebanese Chicken Soup with Vermicelli

a recipe from www.maureenabood.com

The beauty of this soup is in its simplicity. The flavor of the chicken shines through and is complemented with fragrant cinnamon. You can use orzo instead of the vermicelli, but don't skip out on the fresh parsley before serving, as it contributes such a lovely layer of fresh taste and color.

One 3-4 pound chicken, cut into parts, or bone-in breasts
1 large onion, peeled and quartered
1 large carrot, peeled and chopped in 2" pieces
1 celery stalk, chopped in 2" pieces
2 cinnamon sticks
6 whole white peppercorns
1 tablespoon whole allspice berries
2 bay leaves
1 cup vermicelli noodles broken into 1" lengths
Salt and pepper
Fresh flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped

In a large stock or soup pot, place the chicken, onion, carrot, celery, cinnamon sticks, peppercorns, and bay leaves. Cover with cold water by 2 inches (about 9 cups). Bring just to a boil over high heat, but not a rolling boil (that will cloud the broth), then reduce heat to low (just hot enough to make slow, lazy bubbles). Skim the surface of the broth frequently with a spoon or skimming sieve frequently to remove all foam.

Simmer the broth, uncovered, for about two hours. Remove the chicken and set aside until it is cool enough to handle. Pour the broth through a fine mesh sieve and/or cheesecloth into a bowl. Refrigerate the broth until the fat has solidified, a few hours or overnight.

Remove the chicken from the bones and shred into 1- to 2-inch pieces. Skim the fat from the surface of the broth and heat to boiling in a saucepan. Add the chicken and vermicelli and cook until the pasta is tender, about 8 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper (it will take plenty, since the broth is made without any salt). Serve in warmed bowls topped with the parsley. Makes 6-8 servings.