



Hot and Sour Chicken Soup with Leeks

Lesley Stowe, Chef/Owner, Lesley Stowe Fine Foods, Vancouver

Makes about 6 servings

- 8 cups (2 L) chicken stock
- 2 large boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup (250 mL) thinly sliced leeks (white parts only)
- 2 Tbsp (30 mL) minced fresh ginger
- 5 Tbsp (75 mL) Chinese black vinegar (see sidebar) or Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp (15 mL) apple cider vinegar
- ½ tsp (2 mL) pepper
- 2 small baby bok choy, sliced
- 3 to 4 fresh radishes, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp (10 mL) sesame oil
- ¼ cup (60 mL) cilantro leaves
- Thinly sliced red chilies to taste (see sidebar; optional)

1. In a medium pot, combine the stock and chicken breasts. Bring to a boil.
2. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, for 10 minutes.
3. Remove the pot from the heat. Let stand, covered, for 10 minutes.
4. Remove the breasts from the pot, reserving the stock. When cool enough to handle, shred the chicken breasts, keeping the pieces a fairly good size. Set aside.
5. Strain the stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean pot. Add the leeks, ginger, black vinegar, cider vinegar and pepper. Bring to a boil.
6. Reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until the leeks are tender, about 15 minutes.
7. Add the bok choy and radishes. Simmer for 5 minutes.
8. Add the shredded chicken and sesame oil.
9. Ladle up steaming bowlfuls and scatter each portion with cilantro leaves and chilies (if using) to taste.



If your town has an Asian market, it's worth venturing out for the black vinegar, an inexpensive yet delicious addition to traditional Chinese dishes. Note: the red chilies pack quite a punch, so adjust the amount to your liking or serve on the side for guests who may not like their soup quite this hot!



This soup is exactly what I crave when the dull days of January descend upon the "Wet" Coast. It's comforting and light with a good kick of spice from the chilies, and warms you up from the inside out. Feel free to improvise with your favorite vegetables—carrots cut in julienne strips or cremini mushrooms (baby portobellos) make excellent additions.
—Lesley Stowe