

Thai-Inspired Chicken Meatball Soup

By Ali Slagle

YIELD 4 to 6 servings

TIME 30 minutes

This stellar soup is reviving and cozy, made in one pot, and ready in 30 minutes. It starts with ginger-scented chicken-cilantro meatballs that are browned, then simmered in a fragrant coconut milk broth that's inspired by tom kha gai, a Thai chicken-coconut soup seasoned with lemongrass, galangal, makrut lime leaves and chile. A heap of spinach is added for color and flavor, and a squeeze of lime adds brightness and punch. The soup is brothy, so serve it over rice or another grain to make it a full meal.

INGREDIENTS

1 (4-inch) piece fresh ginger, peeled
6 garlic cloves, peeled
1 jalapeño
2 pounds ground chicken
1 large bunch cilantro, leaves and stems finely chopped, a few whole leaves reserved for serving
3 tablespoons fish sauce
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons vegetable or coconut oil, plus more as needed
2 cups chicken broth
1 (14-ounce) can full-fat coconut milk
½ teaspoon granulated sugar
5 ounces baby spinach
1 tablespoon lime juice, plus lime wedges for serving
Steamed white or brown rice, for serving

PREPARATION

Step 1

Using the small holes of a box grater, or a Microplane, grate the ginger, garlic and jalapeño (or finely chop them by hand). Transfer half to a large bowl and set the rest aside. To the large bowl, add the chicken, finely chopped cilantro, 2 tablespoons fish sauce and 1 teaspoon salt. Use your hands or a fork to fully combine but do not overmix.

Step 2

Use your hands or an ice cream scoop to form 2-inch meatballs (about 2 ounces each). In a large Dutch oven or pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Working in batches, add the meatballs in a single layer and cook, flipping halfway through, until golden brown on two sides, 5 to 8 minutes. Transfer to a plate and repeat, adding oil as needed.

Step 3

Once all the meatballs are browned and out of the pot, if the oil is burned, wipe it out and add a bit more to the pot. Reduce the heat to medium, add the reserved ginger mixture and sauté until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the chicken broth, coconut milk, sugar and the remaining 1 tablespoon fish sauce, and bring to a simmer. Add the meatballs and any juices from the plate, and simmer until the flavors come together and the meatballs are cooked through, 5 to 8 minutes.

Step 4

Remove from heat, and stir in the spinach and lime juice. Divide rice among bowls, then top with meatballs, broth and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges.

PRIVATE NOTES

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