

Scallion and Ginger Matzo Ball Soup (a twist on a traditional soup)

(Poland)

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Poland is a country in central Europe. Poland suffered throughout the 20th century. World War II was particularly damaging, as Poland's historically strong Jewish population was almost entirely destroyed.

Matzo Ball Soup is a staple of Jewish cuisine and culture and some think it is the ultimate comfort food. Soup is always good on a cold day, but it is also served on holidays such as Passover. A traditional Matzo Ball Soup is chicken broth mixed with carrots, celery, onion, sometimes dill, with a ball made of matzo meal. Oddly enough, there are many controversies surrounding it, even down to the way it's pronounced.

Ingredients:

For the Soup:

2 pounds skin-on, bone-in chicken drumsticks or thighs (we use drumsticks)
1 teaspoon kosher salt
One 3-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced into 1/8-inch pieces
2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari
4 scallions, sliced on a bias into 1-inch pieces
2 large carrots, chopped into coins
1 tablespoon Chinese black vinegar
Toasted sesame oil, for serving

For the Matzo Balls:

One package of Streit's Matzo Ball Mix
1/4 cup of vegetable oil

Instructions:

Season the chicken all over with the salt. Tie up the ginger in a piece of cheesecloth (or put in a tea bag or tea ball). Put the chicken and ginger in a large pot with the soy sauce, scallions, carrots and 8 cups of water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to a simmer and simmer for about 1 hour, skimming the foam off of the top when needed.

Transfer the chicken to a cutting board and let it cool slightly for about 10 to 15 minutes. When cool enough to handle, use a fork or your hands to pull the meat from the bones; reserve the meat. Return the soup to a very low simmer while you make the matzo balls.

To make the matzo balls, follow the directions on the box.

Return the chicken to the soup and simmer until warmed through. When ready to serve, stir the black vinegar into the soup. Serve the matzo balls in the soup with a drizzle of sesame oil.

Tips: First, you don't have to use a whole chicken for the soup. You can just use chicken legs or thighs or both. It also uses soy sauce and scallions that make the soup really have a different flavor than a traditional matzo ball soup. Finally, the secret to a good matzo ball is to let the mixture sit before you put them into boiling water.