

# Oriental Style Chicken Noodle Soup

by Rachel Rogel

In my opinion, when it comes to rice pasta, the Chinese can't be beat. They came up with the idea, after all. This is a very flexible recipe that has become standard comfort food at my house. Feel free to substitute whatever veggies you have on hand. In the summer I made this with zucchini from my garden and frozen green beans. I'm not much of a measurer, so please consider the amounts to be approximate.

1 onion, diced  
1 cup carrots, on bite sized pieces  
1 cup celery, sliced  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 inch fresh ginger, peeled and grated or diced small  
1 jalapeño pepper, diced (remove seeds for less heat) OR a pinch of red pepper flakes  
2-3 cloves garlic, smashed and diced  
2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts diced into bite sized pieces  
4 cups chicken broth, plus 3-4 cups water  
1 small head Nappa or crinkly green cabbage shredded  
1-2 heads broccoli, cut into florets (cut stem into smaller pieces)  
1 8 oz package rice sticks (vermicelli)  
lemon juice and soy sauce to taste

1. Sauté onions, carrots and celery in oil until onions are soft and starting to brown, stirring occasionally. Add ginger, pepper and garlic and sauté for a few more minutes, stirring constantly.
2. Add chicken, broth and water to the pan. Bring to a boil and simmer until chicken is white. Add cabbage and broccoli and boil for five minutes.
3. Add noodles, adding more water if necessary for the noodles to be covered by liquid. Follow package directions for cooking time. Noodles should be tender but firm. (I find this usually takes more time than the package indicates.)
4. Add lemon juice and soy sauce to taste.
5. Serve in bowls with forks for the noodles and spoons for the broth. The noodles absorb much of the broth. Leftovers can often be eaten on plates.

Notes: - If using whole chicken breasts, I would recommend removing the skin, cooking the breasts whole in the broth, then removing them and shredding the meat.  
- For a vegetarian version, sauté firm tofu (that has been drained by placing it under a heavy board for 20 minutes) with the first seven ingredients. Remove tofu from pan before adding broth and other vegetables and add back after the noodles have cooked. Substitute vegetable broth for chicken broth.

*Rachel Rogel lives in Ohio where she enjoys expressing herself through art, gardening, cooking and getting together with friends from her local support group.*