UCI Health

Ginger cabbage and chicken meatball soup

Ingredients



Meatballs

- 1 pound ground chicken (preferably thigh meat)
- 4 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, very finely chopped
- ⅓ cup old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 large egg
- 4 scallions, white and light green parts finely chopped (save dark green tops for serving)
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1 tablespoon low-sodium tamari
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
- ¼ teaspoon ground white pepper

Soup

- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 medium carrots, thinly sliced on the diagonal
- 4 ounces fresh shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, thinly sliced
- 1 piece fresh ginger (about 3 inches), peeled and cut into thin matchsticks
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 small head Napa cabbage (about 1 pound), cut crosswise into 1-inch ribbons
- 2 tablespoons white miso
- 1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil

Toppings

- Reserved dark green scallion tops, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup fresh cilantro leaves
- 1 teaspoon unseasoned rice vinegar (optional)
- Chili crisp or red pepper flakes (optional)

Nutritional information

Total cost: $27/$4.50 per serving
Serves: 6 (about 1⅔ cups broth and vegetables plus 4 meatballs)
Calories: 250 per serving

Recipe and photo by Jessica VanRoo, executive chef of the Susan Samueli Integrative Health Institute, part of UCI Health.

Directions

- In large bowl, combine finely chopped shiitakes, oats, egg, chopped scallion whites, grated ginger, grated garlic, tamari, sesame oil and white pepper. Let sit for 5 minutes.
- Add ground chicken, combine well with hands until mixture has a soft, sticky texture.
- Line sheet pan with parchment paper. With wet hands, roll mixture into 24 meatballs, each about 1¼ inches wide. Place on pan and refrigerate, then start soup.
- Heat olive oil in large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onion, carrots and sliced shiitakes. Cook 6–7 minutes, stirring occasionally until onion softens and mushrooms start to brown.
- Add ginger matchsticks, sliced garlic, turmeric, and black pepper. Stir 1 minute.
- Add broth, bring to a boil, then lower heat to a gentle simmer.
- Add meatballs one at a time to simmering broth. Cook without stirring for 3 minutes, until they start to firm up.
- Let simmer 7–8 more minutes, stirring gently once or twice. Meatballs are done when they float and reach 165°F in center.
- Add Napa cabbage, simmer 3–4 minutes, until stems are just tender and leaves have wilted.
- Turn off heat. Scoop about ½ cup broth into a small bowl, whisk in miso until it's smooth, then return to pot.
- Stir in 1 teaspoon of sesame oil and rice vinegar (optional).
- Spoon soup into bowls individual bowls, then top with scallion greens, cilantro and chili crisp as desired.

Tips

- Refrigerator: Within 2 hours of cooling, refrigerate soup in airtight containers for up to 4 days. Cabbage will get softer each day and broth flavor usually improves by the second day.

- Freezer: For best results, freeze meatballs and broth without cabbage for up to 3 months. Leave about an inch of space at the top of each container. When reheating, add fresh cabbage. Raw, shaped meatballs can also be frozen on parchment-lined sheet pan until firm, then placed in freezer bag for up to 3 months. Reheat frozen meatballs by dropping into broth and simmering 14 minutes.

- Reheating frozen soup: Thaw in the fridge overnight. Warm soup in a covered pot over medium heat simmering gently until meatballs reach 165°F. If adding fresh cabbage, let simmer 3–4 minutes. For live cultures, reheat soup first, soup, then stir in small spoonful of fresh miso. For single servings, microwave covered bowl 2–3 minutes, stirring halfway through.

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