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Savor/The Story Behind the Recipe

The Secret of the Soup

It's made from Thanksgiving leftovers but it tastes absolutely amazing. And no one can believe the old-school trick that pulls it all together.

BY LISA WATERMAN GRAY

On the day after Thanksgiving last year our fridge was full of leftovers and I was in the mood to cook. Soup was the first dish that came to mind: maybe I'd make my mom's homemade minestrone, split pea, or black bean soup. But my husband's a canned soup kind of guy – that's what he ate while he was growing up – so I wanted create a recipe that I thought he would like, too

Turkey, of course, topped our leftovers list. We had some extra celery stalks and onion from my cornbread stuffing, and I found a random zucchini in the produce drawer. My mother-in-law's wild rice side dish seemed like a promising addition; leftover chicken stock would provide a terrific base.

I soon had diced onion and celery sizzling in olive oil at the bottom of a large soup pot. I added diced zucchini, the broth and the leftover turkey and wild rice. It still needed a punch of flavor, so I threw in some sage.

After about fifteen minutes, I tried it. Hmm. Not exactly what I'd been aiming for. The soup seemed watery and lacked flavor. Then I remembered a story from my husband once told me about his childhood. "Our housekeeper, Opal, combined chicken noodle soup with cream of chicken soup, and it was really good," he'd reported. From the pantry depths, I unearthed a can of the creamy stuff and stirred it in.

Ten minutes later: Perfection. I've made this turkey soup with Opal's secret ingredient ever since. And my husband has loved it from the first spoonful.

Rustic Turkey Soup

WORK: 25 MIN TOTAL: 55 MIN

2 tbsp olive oil
1 medium zucchini, diced
1 small onion, diced
2 celery stalks, diced
4 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1 10 ¾-oz low-sodium cream of chicken soup
½ cups (1 lb) diced white and dark turkey meat
2 cups cooked wild rice
1 tbsp dried sage

1. Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a 4-qt saucepan over medium-high heat. Add zucchini and cook, stirring occasionally until light brown, about 5 min; remove from pan and set aside.
2. Heat remaining 1 tbsp olive oil in the same pan. Add onion and celery and cook until soft, about 5 min. Add broth, soup, turkey and sage. Increase heat to high and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer soup, covered, for 30 min.
3. Just before serving, add the cooked zucchini and wild rice.

SERVES 4 to 6

Per serving: 370 calories, 13g total fat (3g sat fat), 346mg sodium, 26g carbs, 77 mg chol, 37g protein, 3g fiber