

chicken and cream of mushroom soup recipe

Chicken and cream of mushroom soup recipe is a classic comfort dish that warms the soul and satisfies the palate. This recipe combines tender pieces of chicken with the earthy flavor of mushrooms, all enveloped in a creamy, rich sauce. It's perfect for busy weeknights or a cozy family dinner. Not only is this dish delicious, but it is also incredibly versatile and can be served over rice, pasta, or even enjoyed on its own as a hearty soup. In this article, we will explore the ingredients, step-by-step cooking instructions, variations, and tips to make your chicken and cream of mushroom soup a hit at your dinner table.

Ingredients

To create a delightful chicken and cream of mushroom soup, gather the following ingredients:

For the Soup

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts (or thighs)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 8 ounces fresh mushrooms, sliced (you can use cremini, button, or a mix)
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup heavy cream (or half-and-half for a lighter option)
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme (or 1 tablespoon fresh thyme)
- 1 teaspoon salt (adjust to taste)
- ½ teaspoon black pepper (adjust to taste)
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Optional Add-ins

To enhance the flavor and texture of your soup, consider adding:

- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup frozen peas
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce for an umami boost

Cooking Instructions

Making chicken and cream of mushroom soup is a straightforward process. Follow these steps for a delicious result:

Step 1: Prepare the Chicken

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat.
2. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper.
3. Add the chicken to the pot and cook for about 6-7 minutes on each side until golden brown. The chicken does not need to be fully cooked at this stage.
4. Remove the chicken from the pot and set it aside to cool slightly. Once cooled, shred or dice the chicken into bite-sized pieces.

Step 2: Sauté Vegetables

1. In the same pot, add the chopped onion and sauté for about 3-4 minutes until translucent.
2. Add the minced garlic and sliced mushrooms, cooking for an additional 4-5 minutes until the mushrooms are tender and have released their moisture.
3. If using, add diced carrots and celery at this stage and cook for another 3 minutes.

Step 3: Create the Soup Base

1. Return the shredded chicken to the pot.
2. Pour in the chicken broth and stir well to combine. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil.
3. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low and let it simmer for about 15-20 minutes. This allows the flavors to meld and ensures the chicken is fully cooked.

Step 4: Add Cream and Seasonings

1. After simmering, stir in the heavy cream and dried thyme. If using Worcestershire sauce or soy sauce, add it at this point.
2. Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning with additional salt and pepper if necessary.
3. Let the soup simmer for an additional 5 minutes to thicken slightly.

Step 5: Serve and Garnish

1. Ladle the soup into bowls.
2. Garnish with fresh parsley for a pop of color and flavor.
3. Serve hot, with crusty bread or over rice or pasta if desired.

Serving Suggestions

The beauty of chicken and cream of mushroom soup lies in its versatility. Here are some serving ideas to enhance your meal:

- Over Rice: Serve the soup over a bed of fluffy white rice or brown rice for a filling dish.
- With Pasta: Toss with cooked egg noodles or pasta for a hearty pasta dish.
- With Crusty Bread: Pair the soup with a slice of warm, crusty bread or a baguette for dipping.
- In a Bread Bowl: Serve in a hollowed-out bread bowl for a fun and rustic presentation.

Variations of Chicken and Cream of Mushroom Soup

While the basic recipe is delicious on its own, here are some variations to try:

1. Chicken and Wild Rice Soup

Add cooked wild rice or a rice blend to the soup for added texture and flavor. This variation adds a nutty flavor profile that complements the mushrooms beautifully.

2. Creamy Chicken and Spinach

Add fresh spinach to the soup in the last few minutes of cooking. The spinach will wilt down and add a vibrant color as well as a nutritional boost.

3. Gluten-Free Options

To make this dish gluten-free, ensure that your chicken broth and any additional sauces are gluten-free. You can thicken the soup with cornstarch mixed with water instead of using flour.

4. Dairy-Free Version

For a dairy-free version, substitute the heavy cream with coconut milk or a nut milk of your choice. Use olive oil or vegan butter instead of regular butter for sautéing.

Tips for the Perfect Chicken and Cream of Mushroom Soup

To elevate your soup to the next level, consider the following tips:

- Use Fresh Ingredients: Fresh mushrooms and herbs will provide the best flavor.
- Don't Rush the Sautéing: Take your time to sauté the onions and mushrooms until they are nicely caramelized; this adds depth to the soup.
- Chicken Options: Thighs are often more flavorful and tender than breasts; feel free to use a mix or your preferred cut.
- Storage: Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat gently on the stovetop, adding a splash of broth or cream if it thickens too much.

Conclusion

The chicken and cream of mushroom soup recipe is a comforting classic that can be enjoyed in various ways. Whether you choose to keep it simple or add your own twist, this dish is sure to please family and friends alike. With its creamy texture and rich flavors, it not only nourishes the body but also warms the heart. So, gather your ingredients, follow the steps, and enjoy a bowl of homemade goodness that embodies the essence of comfort food. Happy cooking!

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the basic ingredients needed for a chicken and cream of mushroom soup recipe?

The basic ingredients include chicken (breast or thighs), cream of mushroom soup, chicken broth, onions, garlic, and seasonings like salt, pepper, and thyme.

Can I use fresh mushrooms instead of cream of mushroom soup in the recipe?

Yes, you can sauté fresh mushrooms and create a homemade cream sauce using heavy cream, flour, and broth for a fresher taste.

How long does it take to cook chicken and cream of mushroom soup?

Typically, it takes about 30-40 minutes to cook the chicken and prepare the soup, depending on whether you're using cooked chicken or raw.

Is it possible to make a healthier version of chicken and cream of mushroom soup?

Yes, you can use low-fat cream of mushroom soup, substitute chicken with turkey, and add more vegetables like spinach or carrots for added nutrition.

Can I freeze chicken and cream of mushroom soup?

Yes, you can freeze the soup. Just make sure to cool it completely before transferring it to airtight containers. It can be stored in the freezer for up to 3 months.

What can I serve with chicken and cream of mushroom soup?

You can serve it with crusty bread, rice, or noodles to make a complete meal. A side salad also pairs well with the soup.

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