

Chicken & Cabbage Gumbo

Serves 6-8 | 30 minutes prep + 2 hours cook time

I met Melissa Martin at one of her early Mosquito Supper Club events in New Orleans years ago. The cajun brunch included shrimp jambalaya, leaf lard chocolate chip cookies, and, of course, gumbo. Martin grew up in the watery world of Terrebonne Parish, downriver and outside the city's protective levees, and her Mosquito Supper Club cookbook offers an insider's look at a world that's rapidly disappearing.

She writes that "gumbo is the tie that binds in South Louisiana. It symbolizes family, a shared table, local ingredients, patience, and the subtleties of culture and tradition." Martin also notes that there's no one true gumbo, and that the soup "intersects different countries' culinary traditions and is emblematic of the nations whose people became the building blocks of Louisiana."

Some cooks make gumbo with a flour and fat roux, others insist that gumbo must include okra. Martin's mother Maxine made her everyday chicken gumbo with neither, but used slow cooked onions for a deep, rich flavor. This version borrows Maxine's technique but adds a few nontraditional ingredients to make a hearty stew that combines South Louisiana gumbo with my favorite chicken soup.

1 whole chicken, cut into pieces*

1 qt chicken broth

2 large onions, chopped

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher sea salt

2 celery stalks, chopped

2 large carrots, chopped

½ head cabbage, chopped

2 tablespoon soy sauce

1 teaspoon thyme flower

½ teaspoon garlic powder

1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar

Step 1 Put the chicken and broth in a 4-6 qt stockpot, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove the chicken, let cool, pull off the skin, pick the meat from the bones, and tear or chop into bite-sized pieces. Return the chopped chicken to the pot with the broth.

Step 2 While the chicken simmers, cook the onions in the olive oil with the salt over medium-low heat until dark and caramelized, 45-60 minutes. Stir occasionally, and if the onions start to burn, add a few tablespoons of water. Add the celery for the final 10 minutes of cooking.

Step 3 Add the cooked onions, carrots, and cabbage to the soup, and stir in the soy sauce, thyme, and garlic powder. Simmer the soup covered for at least 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Taste and add salt as needed. Remove from the heat and stir in the vinegar.

*substitute 4-6 bone-in chicken thighs