

# Chicken Soup for Summer Colds

4 servings

This soup started because what I was really needing was a giant bowl of broth. I gently simmered a whole chicken in a large pot of lightly salted water with onions, a few rogue carrots, and about a half bunch of celery for 2-ish hours until the chicken was effectively braised and the water had turned to stock. If you don't have the desire to go that route, you can use boxed/store-bought chicken (or vegetable broth) and leftover chicken/picked rotisserie (or cut-up tofu).

I gave the alternative to use tomatoes since tomatillos aren't quite "everywhere" yet, but they are in many stores. Some general grocery stores keep them next to "specialty produce" like ginger, mushrooms, and small chilies. That said, I do strongly suggest doing the version with tomatillos. Their acidity is unrivaled, and the pectin content (the stuff that makes jam jammy) really thickens the soup in an excellent, extremely satisfying way. If you *are* using tomatoes, be sure to adjust the acidity with a splash of vinegar, lemon or lime juice.

As for the herbs, this might be the one and only time I'm recommending basil above any other herb. So basil lovers, please and truly do: go wild.

**2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more**

**4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced**

**1 medium leek, the whole thing thinly sliced**

**1 1/2-2 pounds tomatillos (or tomatoes), husks removed, quartered or chopped**

**1 large bunch kale or swiss chard, stems removed and leaves torn into bite-sized pieces (about 6 cups)**

**6-8 cups chicken or vegetable broth**

**3 cups picked chicken meat or tofu, cut into bite-sized pieces**

**2-3 cups basil, cilantro and/or parsley, torn**

**Crushed red pepper flakes or hot sauce (optional)**

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Set a little bit of the white part of the leek aside to top your soup later and add the remaining leek and all of the garlic to the pot. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until the leek and garlic are totally softened and starting to get a little color, 8-10 minutes.

2. Add tomatillos (or tomatoes) and season again with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally until tomatillos (or tomatoes) are totally falling apart, almost turning to a jam-like texture. Add leafy greens and season again with salt and pepper. Cook them just till wilted, a few minutes.

3. Add chicken broth and bring to a simmer. Taste every now and then for seasoning and simmer until the broth is tangy, a little salty, and very delicious (season with vinegar, lemon or lime juice if using tomatoes). If you can't taste anything because you have a cold, this will take about 10-15 minutes of simmering.

4. Add the chicken and season one more time to taste. Divide among bowls and top with a few rings of the raw leek, all the herbs, a drizzle of olive oil, and some crushed chili flakes or hot sauce if you like.