

Chicken and Chickpea Soup

Serves 4–6

I love making this soup, but it never turns out the same way twice, which should come as some comfort for you. I've written out the recipe below, but it's meant to be flexible, made with what you have/what you've made. Calling it a leftovers soup would be selling it short, but I am all about the under-promise and over-deliver, so maybe that's exactly what it is?

I mention you can use canned chickpeas, but the real magic happens when you cook the dried chickpeas in the broth (the magic happens to both the chickpeas and the broth). So just because you can, doesn't mean you should (but I do want this to be accessible!). This particular soup is a good example of something taking more time than you probably want to spend on dinner, but the return on your effort will be great, I promise.

3 cups chicken broth*

2 cups dried chickpeas (or 2 15-ounce cans of chickpeas, drained and rinsed)

1 large shallot, quartered lengthwise (a red or yellow onion will work, too)

6–8 peeled and crushed garlic cloves

1–2 dried chiles (can be small or large, smokey or not, dealers choice), or a generous pinch of crushed red pepper flakes

Olive oil, for drizzling

2-ish cups picked chicken (from roasting a chicken, from a storebought chicken, from leftover chicken, poached chicken...you get the idea. All chicken works here)

2 stalks celery, thinly sliced, plus the leaves if you've got them

2 scallions, white and light green parts, thinly sliced

Lemons, halved, for squeezing over

Parmesan, for shaving over the soup or maybe just for a snack

1. Bring the chicken broth and 3 cups of water to a simmer (if using canned chickpeas, no need to use water). Add the chickpeas, shallot, garlic, chiles, and a good pour of olive oil. Season with salt and simmer on low until the chickpeas are extremely tender and cooked through, to the point of creaminess. Depending on how old your dried chickpeas are, this can take upwards of two hours, but shouldn't be more than that. If using canned, let them simmer about an hour, just to really soften even further and acclimate into the broth. (Soaking the dried chickpeas will cut down on this time by about 30 minutes, but at that point, who cares, what're 30 minutes? Where are you going? Nowhere. If you have an instant pot or pressure cooker, sure, use it— but I enjoy this long-simmering process the old fashioned way). As the chickpeas cook and simmer, they might want a little more liquid—go ahead and add it. Not all simmers and pots are created equal, so your liquid may be evaporating at a different rate, etc.

2. Once the chickpeas are where you want them (soft, tender, creamy, supple, salty, delicious, amazing, seasoned, gorgeous, flavorful) remove the soup from the heat and add celery and chicken. Season with salt and pepper, maybe more chili flake if you want something spicy. No need to keep simmering at this point, the chicken and celery will just warm through (you don't want to soften the celery or overcook the chicken).

3. Ladle into a bowl and scatter with celery leaves (parsley is a good substitute here), scallion, and a squeeze of lemon. Parmesan if you want, a grind of black pepper, and drizzle of olive oil to finish.

*If using storebought chicken broth, it may need a little extra help. Something I often do is simmer sub-par storebought chicken broth with a chopped onion, a few sprigs of thyme or oregano, a sliced fennel bulb/celery stalk/carrot or something, and season it with salt and pepper. You want whatever broth you're using, be it storebought or otherwise, to be as delicious and seasoned as possible.

