
My Family Recipe Of Chicken Soup

Since I was a toddler, my mom has been the cook of the household. Every day except Fridays (Take-out Day), there hasn't been a meal not cooked solely by my mother. She never needed any help, though she did allow me to be her little helper, being in charge of cutting vegetables or washing white rice for her delicious meals. Her cooking influenced me to be a great cook like her someday. Starting with a family household of six: my mom, father, two older sisters', and older brother, dinner time was an exciting moment in our family memories. Unfortunately, when I was sixteen, my family grew more distant. However, when my mom made a certain dish my family would always come together under one roof, her famous chicken soup.

My mother makes chicken soup in a huge metal pot, about 10-12 inches in diameter. What's special about this soup is the ingredients that are incorporated and how it can bring people together. My family adores this soup; it wouldn't matter what plans we had we always made the time to head to the kitchen to pick up our bowl of soup. To get all of her ingredients, she would go to our local Puerto Rican grocery store named Julio's. I would always accompany my mom on her trip to Julio's and help her get all the ingredients implied for the soup.

The must-haves for the soup are chicken, of course; dasheen, as West Indians call it, which is a root vegetable similar to a potato with a dark brown, rough and glossy skin; Kabocha, Asian in origin; essentially a Japanese pumpkin but with a green skin and the common orange flesh of a pumpkin; a green vegetable belonging to the squash family called Chayote but also referred to as chocho by West Indians; sweet potato (white only), scallions, and carrots. To make the broth she usually starts off by boiling the pumpkin, chicken, sweet potato, dasheen, and adds a Sazon seasoning packet. Once the pumpkin is soft, she takes it out and mashes it into a smooth paste and puts it back in the broth. This not only gives the soup its beautiful orange color, but also a thicker taste. Then the carrots, scallions, and sweet potato go in; she leaves the chayote last along with handmade dumplings because of their rapid cooking time. Then comes the hard part: the waiting time, being teased and taunted by the indulging aroma that develops while the ingredients boil. So anxious to have a taste, mostly everyone in the household would sneak a spoonful and not regular tablespoons, a soup spoonful. After getting a taste of the soup, that even made us more anxious to get our own personal bowl.

Finally comes the moment everyone's been waiting for, the moment where my mom would say "come get some soup!". We would bolt down to the kitchen, grab a big glass bowl and fight over who was going to get the bowl filled second, my father always got his bowl first. Once our bowls are filled we quickly grab a spoon and dig in. It feels like thanksgiving every time we have it. Funny conversations, coming back for refills, our stomachs about to burst, then usually everyone takes a nap.

Even my family isn't always together on a day that should bring family together, Thanksgiving. Usually at least one person is missing from the table when it's time to feast but amazingly, my mom's chicken soup accomplishes assembling my household under one roof and keeping them under that roof for hours. I appreciate my mom for always doing her thing in the kitchen, especially while working full-time. My mom work seven-to three-shifts, six days a week and still manages to get dinner fixed at a reasonable time, not too late. She inspires me to have that

much energy even when it's all drained out. I want to be that mother one day that is a "supermom", no matter what obstacle that is faced, I can still pull through and get what I need to get done. I want to apply that type of drive to my college life as well. Soon I'll be working full-time and being a full-time student is going to be hectic. I need to have the ability to generate the energy and drive that my mother possesses. I am my mother's daughter so if she could do it, I know I can. What probably worked for my mom was that she is methodical, she has her usual routine, work, take a shower, wash dishes, get started on dinner. She is very organized now that I analyze her daily activities. Overall, I hope to cook meals that will have an impact on my family like my mom has.

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