

Introduction

Slow cooker chicken stew is a comforting and hearty dish that brings warmth and satisfaction to any dining table. Made with tender chicken thighs, colorful vegetables, and a rich broth, this stew is a perfect meal for family gatherings or a cozy night in. The beauty of slow cooker recipes lies in their simplicity and convenience; just chop your ingredients, throw them in the pot, and let the slow cooker do the rest.

This chicken stew not only showcases the deliciously savory flavors of thyme and rosemary but also incorporates the natural sweetness of root vegetables and the freshness of green peas. Each bowl is a delightful mix of textures and flavors that will leave you feeling satisfied and nourished. Whether served on a chilly evening or shared during a festive occasion, slow cooker chicken stew is sure to please everyone.

Detailed Ingredients

olive oil

Using two tablespoons of olive oil provides the perfect base for sautéing the chicken, infusing it with a rich flavor and ensuring it cooks evenly.

chicken thighs

1 1/2 pounds of chicken thighs are ideal for this recipe, as they are tender and hold up well during the slow cooking process. Cutting them into 1-inch pieces allows for even cooking and easy serving.

all-purpose flour

Three tablespoons of all-purpose flour help to coat the chicken, creating a light, flavorful crust that adds depth to the stew.

dried thyme

One teaspoon of dried thyme infuses the stew with a subtle earthy flavor, enhancing the overall taste of the dish.

dried rosemary

Similarly, one teaspoon of dried rosemary brings a robust aroma and flavor to the stew, complementing the chicken perfectly.

salt

Starting with half a teaspoon of salt helps season the chicken and vegetables. Adjusting the salt level later ensures the flavors are just right.

garlic

Six cloves of minced garlic provide a fragrant base, enhancing the richness of the dish and contributing to its home-cooked flavor.

onion

One diced onion adds sweetness and depth, enveloping the stew in a mouthwatering aroma as it cooks.

carrots

Three peeled and sliced carrots add a lovely sweetness and vibrant color to the stew.

potatoes

Two large potatoes (about one pound) cut into 1/2-inch cubes contribute heartiness and a comforting texture to the dish.

chicken broth

Three cups of chicken broth serve as the main liquid, developing the stew's flavor while keeping it moist.

bay leaf

Adding one bay leaf infuses the broth with a hint of herbal flavor that balances the other ingredients.

milk

Half a cup of milk is stirred in toward the end of cooking to add creaminess to the stew, enriching its flavor and texture.

frozen green peas

One cup of frozen green peas provides a pop of color and sweetness, brightening the overall taste of the stew.

black pepper

Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste, enhances the dish's quiet heat and flavor, making it more well-rounded.

Prep Time

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time, Total Time, Yield

Cook Time: 6-8 hours (Low) or 3-4 hours (High)

Total Time: 6 hours 20 minutes

Yield: 6 servings

Detailed Directions and Instructions

Sear the Chicken

To begin, heat two tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. In a bowl, toss the chicken pieces with three tablespoons of all-purpose flour, half a teaspoon of salt, one teaspoon of dried thyme, and one teaspoon of dried rosemary until well coated. Once the oil is hot, add the chicken to the skillet and brown it on all sides for about five minutes, allowing the flour to create a nice crust. This process not only adds flavor but also enhances the stew's overall texture. After browning the chicken, transfer it to the slow cooker.

Add the Vegetables

In the slow cooker, add the minced garlic, diced onion, sliced carrots, and cubed potatoes. These vegetables will soften and meld their flavors together over the long cooking period. Pour in three cups of chicken broth, add one bay leaf, and stir everything to combine. This creates a flavorful base that will elevate the dish.

Cook the Stew

Cover the slow cooker and set it to cook on low for 6-8 hours or on high for 3-4 hours. The low and slow method allows the chicken and vegetables to become tender and allows flavors to develop fully. It's a perfect destination for those who want a "set it and forget it" meal.

Finish with Milk and Peas

About 20 minutes before you're ready to serve, remove the lid and stir in half a cup of milk along with one cup of frozen green peas. The milk adds a luxurious creaminess, while the

peas introduce a fresh pop of color and flavor. Season with additional salt and black pepper to taste, and allow the stew to cook for another 20 minutes.

Serve

Once everything is cooked through and flavors are balanced, remove the bay leaf from the stew. Ladle the chicken stew into bowls and serve hot. Pair it with crusty bread for dipping or over a warm bed of rice to soak up the delicious broth. This hearty meal is sure to bring comfort and satisfaction to everyone at the table.

Notes

- To enhance the flavor, consider adding other herbs such as parsley or oregano.
- Feel free to substitute chicken thighs with boneless, skinless chicken breasts for a leaner option; however, they may dry out faster, so adjust cooking time accordingly.
- For a bit of heat, add a teaspoon of red pepper flakes or a dash of hot sauce.
- If you prefer, you can also use fresh vegetables instead of frozen peas; just add them in the last 10-15 minutes of cooking.

Cook Techniques

- Browning: Searing the chicken before adding it to the slow cooker deepens its flavor and creates a richer broth.
- Slow Cooking: This method allows the ingredients to meld together over time, developing a complex flavor while ensuring the chicken is tender and juicy.

FAQ

Can I prepare the chicken stew the night before?

Absolutely! You can chop all the ingredients and place them in the slow cooker insert, then refrigerate them overnight. In the morning, add the liquids and set the slow cooker to cook.

How can I store leftovers?

Store any leftover stew in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to three days. It also freezes well; just make sure to cool it completely before transferring it to a freezer-safe container.

Can I substitute vegetables in this stew?

Certainly! Feel free to use any root vegetables you have on hand, such as parsnips or turnips. Leafy greens can also be added in the last few minutes of cooking for added nutrition.

Is it possible to make this stew gluten-free?

Yes! Substitute the all-purpose flour with a gluten-free flour blend or cornstarch to thicken the stew.

What can I serve with chicken stew?

This stew pairs wonderfully with crusty artisan bread, rice, or even dumplings. A side salad can also complement the meal beautifully.

Conclusion

In summary, slow cooker chicken stew is a versatile and comforting meal that brings warmth and joy to your dining experience. With minimal effort and a handful of wholesome ingredients, you can create a dish that is both hearty and nourishing. Perfect for busy weeknights or leisurely weekends, this stew is sure to become a family favorite.

More Recipe Suggestions and Combinations**Vegetarian Lentil Stew**

For a meatless option, consider making a hearty lentil stew filled with vegetables and spices for a warming and protein-packed alternative.

Beef and Barley Stew

For those who love red meat, a beef and barley stew cooked in a slow cooker with root veggies makes for a robust and flavorful dish.

Minestrone Soup

Give a nod to Italian flavors with a minestrone soup, combining pasta, beans, and vegetables in a delicate tomato broth for a lighter option.

Chicken and Rice Casserole

Combine your favorite ingredients into a one-dish chicken and rice casserole, baked to perfection with a golden top.

Potato and Leek Soup

For a creamy and comforting soup, a potato and leek soup topped with chives makes for a delightful starter or lunch option.

Experiment with these suggestions, and let your culinary creativity flourish while whipping up delightful meals in your slow cooker!