

A Politically Incorrect Soup

By David Larkin

Now that fall is here, and winter not far off, it is time to think about soups. Not, mind you, that we haven't been enjoying the tomato soup made with local tomatoes. But we have two particularly favourite soups: Janet and Pierre Berton's Clam Chowder and this month's subject, Mulligatawny Soup.

Mulligatawny is a corruption of the Tamil name milagn-tannir and the soup recipe was brought back to the British Isles by the merchants of the East India Company, probably in the late 1700s or early 1800s. It is a very flavourful soup. I always make it in a pressure cooker, and recommend that route, but I include the ordinary cooking times.

Mulligatawny Soup

400 gms chicken (I use 4 chicken thighs, with bones and skin)

1 medium onion

1 large carrot

1 small parsnip

Bouquet garni (cheesecloth bag of parsley, thyme, bay leaf, 4 cloves & 10 peppercorns)

1 small cooking apple

25 gms (1 oz) of butter

2 - 3 tbsps of curry powder (I use 1 Tbsp hot (Madras) and 1 Tbsp mild curry paste, preferably Patak's)

1 litre stock (water from cooking vegetables preferred, with 2 chicken stock cubes)

½ tspn lemon juice


½ tspn salt


¼ tspn molasses

Carrot for garnish

Trim any fat off the chicken. Peel the apple, and chop the apple and onion up finely. Melt the butter in a deep saucepan (or pressure cooker) and fry the onion and apple quickly for 2-3 minutes. Add the curry powder/paste, cook gently for 2 minutes. Gradually add the stock and stir until boiling. Add the chicken. Prepare and slice the carrot and parsnip, and add to the pan with the bouquet garni, lemon juice and salt. Simmer until the meat is


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very tender (2 hours, or if using a pressure cooker - 20 minutes).

Taste the soup and add the molasses or extra lemon juice as needed to obtain a flavour that is neither predominantly sweet nor acid. Remove the bouquet garni and the chicken, removing skin and bones. Reserve the chicken. Strain the soup through a strainer using a wooden spoon. (If you have a food mill, now is your big chance to use it). Take about half the meat and dice before adding back into the soup. Julienne a carrot and parboil it or half cook it in the microwave. Use as garnish. Reheat soup when required. May be served with a side of boiled long grain rice and chutney. Serves 4

Instead of straining the soup and vegetables through a strainer, you can use a blender, but then you don't get a nice clear soup, which I prefer.


Enjoy this relic of the Empire's colonial days.

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