

Bob's Chicken and Dumplings

There are hundreds if not thousands of this comfort food on the Internet. So here's my version!

First, let's get a few things straight:

1. I like mine with a thick sauce (gravy) not a thin soup like most versions out there. This adds extra steps, but is so much better.
2. I prefer to use the dark cuts of the chicken With the bones rather than the skinless boneless breast meat versions. This version may be a little more difficult to eat and you may even have to pick up the chicken with your fingers! Some may say "How Plebeian", but I say it's OK to pickup chicken as long as there is a bone. Yes, even if it's gooey and you have to lick your fingers. The dark meat and the bones give the dish more flavor, plus the chicken is not as dry as with pure white breast meat. The extra chicken fat helps with the thickening process.
3. My bread making skills are yet to be developed well, so I have included what some might call a copout. I suggest using Bisquick for the dumplings. Maybe I'll update the recipe in the future after some testing and baking trials. My biscuits in the past have always come out like hockey pucks and you don't need that for this recipe.
4. Because this is a general method, I do not necessarily give you a complete set of quantities. You may like more of one thing and less of another. You might even want to add something different. As with many of my 'recipes' this is a method rather than a measured chemistry experiment.

So here we go.

First a general list of ingredients:

Chicken cut up into servable pieces with the large gobs of fat removed, but don't get too good at removing fat, you want some left on the chicken. I prefer to use the leg, thigh and maybe a wing or two. If you get hind quarters, you can save the partial back for making chicken broth along with the extra fat and skin for schmaltz. Please see other recipes for Bob's version of the broth and schmaltz. If you start with whole chicken(s) and plan to use the entire thing, you can cut the breasts in half and then across in half again. Remember, you don't have to skin them nor remove any of the bones. You might as well include the backs too. All depends on what you have and how many you are trying to feed. You will want to allow 2 to 3 pieces of chicken per person.

Onions coarsely chopped

Carrots peeled and cut into bite sizes pieces

Potatoes peeled and cut into small bite sized pieces (Store in a bowl of water until ready to use so they don't turn brown.)

Home Made Chicken Broth

Salt, Pepper, Sage, Ground Marjoram

Flour or Corn Starch (see note in the process section)

Bisquick (original brand) (with milk) **Or** see update for homemade dumplings. (Better)

The Process

The first thing to do is dig out some of your home made chicken broth from the freezer. If you don't have any, you can make some from my recipe using 'trash' parts of the chicken or regular parts some time previous to making this recipe. If you don't have the time, you can

sort of make the broth as you cook up this pot of goodies, so don't worry if you don't have the home made broth. I don't suggest using store bought canned broth, just follow below if you don't have the home made stuff.

In a large heavy pot, toss in all your cut up chicken parts and the onion; then just cover all the chicken with a 50-50 mixture of water and chicken broth. If you don't have the chicken broth you will want to just cover with water and a healthy amount of salt, pepper and ground marjoram to the pot. Bring the pot to a good boil and then cover and reduce the heat to a fine simmer. Cook for about 45 minutes. Keep checking to make sure it is just simmering, not an active boil and add water if necessary.

After about 45 minutes, add the carrots and potatoes (and water if necessary). Increase the heat to bring up to a simmer and cook for another 15 to 20 minutes or so, until the potatoes and carrots are almost cooked through.

While the vegetables and chicken are cooking make of a batch of Bisquick dumplings according to the package directions. Some boxes don't include a dumplings recipe. Just follow the recipe for drop biscuits.

Update: OK now I need to make an update to this recipe. A while back I made the Chicken & Dumplings using Bisquick and it was a disaster! Now, it was and was not the Bisquick that caused the problem. The dumplings turned out hard and almost inedible lumps. So yes, it was the Bisquick, however after inspecting the box I found that it was over three years out of date. Opps – my bad not Bisquick. I had made a large pot but only a few dumplings because the guests I had invited had to cancel, so the dinner was luckily for me alone. With lots of the chicken and broth left, I had guests over the next night, but went back to my eighty plus year old standby recipe book to make dumplings from scratch. So rather than use the Bisquick, here's a recipe that you may use for scratch dumplings:

Irish Stew Dumplings

1 Cup Sifted Flour

½ teaspoon salt

3teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon bacon drippings (or cooking oil, butter, etc.) (don't use hydrogenated oils or shortening. See my diatribe on Fats in another document.)

1/3 to ½ cup milk.

When ready below to start the dumplings: Sift dry ingredients together, cut in fat and add enough milk to make a drop batter. Drop by spoonfuls over top of Chicken & Dumplings (stew). Cover the kettle and let the dumplings steam fo15 minutes without lifting the cover. The cover should be a tight fitting lid. The stew should be kept boiling. Serves 6. Modify quantity as needed for the amount of dinner you are making and the size of the cooking pot.

When the vegetables are almost cooked with a slotted spoon carefully remove the chicken and vegetables to a large bowl and cover to keep warm. You should have left a good broth with very soft onion pieces. Keep some heat of this pot to keep it hot and add a healthy amount of sage. Be sure to taste for the other spices and add more if need be.

Flour Method

If there is a lot fat floating on the top, skim out the oil and place it in a large fry pan (you can add some schmaltz if you don't have enough from the pot). Add enough flour to soak up the oil and bring it up to temperature. As soon as the flour just begins to brown a little add broth from the pot and stir continually until it thickens. You will want to add much of the broth and

thicken it as much as you see fit. Once thick enough add the fry pan sauce back to the pot and mix well with what ever broth is left and allow it to thicken more.

Corn Starch Method

If there is not much fat and you don't want to use schmaltz and the flour method; you will want to bring the broth to a simmer. Put corn starch in a small bowl and add cold water. Mix it well so that all the starch is wet then add it to the simmering pot of broth. Stir well and let the mixture thicken. Add more corn starch if it needs to be thicker.

Once you have a thickened sauce, taste and add any further spices as you see fit. Carefully add the chicken and vegetables back into the pot and bring up the heat a little. The thickened sauce won't boil like before, so be careful not to scorch the bottom. Add the dumplings (drop biscuits) to the top of the pot a spoon full at a time. Cover and cook for another 8 to 10 minutes (15 minutes for homemade update) until the dumplings are done.

You should be ready to serve. Place the pot on the trivet at the table or serve from the stove family style, your choice.

Enjoy!

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