

January is National Citrus Month

By Marilu Torres

Why is January National Citrus Month? January is the peak season for citrus because they grow best in the chilly weather. Citrus fruits contain flavonoids, and some examples of citrus fruits are lemons, oranges, and grapefruits, which contain fiber, vitamin C, calcium, potassium, and vitamin A. You can add citrus to your meals by adding citrus fruits to salads, drinking freshly squeezed orange juice, or eating citrus fruit as a snack.¹

During my food service rotation as a dietetic intern, my intern group and I were assigned a cafeteria station takeover project. Keeping National Citrus Month in mind, we decided to make a Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup. We took over the soup station and made our chosen soup recipe one of the four soups. The other soups were Chili and Bean Soup, Beef and Mixed Vegetable Soup, and Garden Vegetable Soup. While cooking our soup, we each contributed to making the Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup, and we were excited about the outcome. We learned to communicate with kitchen staff to find and gather the supplies and ingredients we needed in a kitchen we had never worked in before. Safety was an important lesson since an intern had a burn accident after transferring the soup to smaller containers, and we wore gloves to prevent getting cut when cutting ingredients.

During lunch, we communicated with customers and spoke to them about the ingredients in each soup. Word spread fast about favored soups, and the cold, snowy weather in our area helped it stay busy. Many customers did not realize that the people who serve the food may also be the ones who made it. We had some customers embrace our soup and others be very outspoken about how unflattering the name sounded without trying it first and not realizing we made it. I noticed customers were more comfortable with simple terms. For example, our soup was Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup. Some customers were reluctant to get it because of “lemon” and the “orzo” in the name when it tasted very similar to a Chicken Noodle Soup, a name best known

in the area. Overall, the station takeover was successful, and we served 48 out of the 64 servings made. Below is the recipe for the soup we prepared. We loved this soup recipe because many or all the ingredients can be adjusted to meet different tastes and flavor preferences!

Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup Recipe²

Prep Time: 10 minutes, Cook Time: 20 minutes, Total Time: 30 minutes, Servings: 8(1 cup servings)

- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 stalks celery, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon thyme, chopped
- 4 cups chicken broth or chicken stock
- 2 cups cooked chicken, cut into small pieces 1 cup orzo
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 lemon (zest and juice)
- 1 tablespoon tarragon, chopped (optional) 1 handful parsley, chopped

Directions

1. Heat the oil in a large stock pot over medium-high heat, add the onions, carrot, and celery and cook until tender, about 8-10 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and thyme and cook until fragrant, about a minute.

3. Add the chicken broth or stock, chicken, and orzo, bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer until the orzo is just tender, about 5 minutes.

4. Season with salt and pepper to taste and mix in the lemon juice, zest, tarragon, and parsley.

Nutrition Facts: Calories 172, Fat 3.2g (Saturated 0.5g, Trans 0g), Cholesterol 27mg, Sodium 322mg, Carbs 20.5g (Fiber 2g, Sugars 3.2g), Protein 14.8g



References

1. The Hale Groves Team. (2017). January is National Citrus... Retrieved January 12, 2022.
<https://www.halegroves.com/blog/january-national-citrus-month/>
2. Closet Cooking. (2016) Lemon Chicken Orzo Soup. Retrieved January 12, 2022.
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