

Escarole Soup

(makes a BIG pot of soup)

For the meatballs:

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup bread crumbs (unseasoned)
- 2 Tbsp parsley flakes
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1 tsp ground black pepper



Mix all ingredients well. Form into bite-size meatballs and fry until brown on all sides and cooked through. Set aside until ready to put into soup. If you won't be eating the soup until another day, refrigerate separately and put into the soup when it is made.

For the escarole:

Clean one head of escarole, discarding the outermost layer of tough dark green leaves. Separate the remaining leaves and tear into large pieces; use all except the innermost (lightest) leaves for the soup. (You can use the innermost leaves for a delicious antipasto salad.) Wash thoroughly and set aside until almost ready to serve the soup. You will only cook the greens for about 5-7 minutes.

For the pasta:

In a saucepan, bring approximately 4 cups of water to a boil. Add 1 cup of small pasta (such as Acini di Pepe or Soup Mac; if you can't get Acini di Pepe, you can use Ditalini or Orzo).

Cook only until just al dente (firmly cooked, but not mushy), about 5-7 minutes, depending on the size of the pasta. Drain and set it aside. Refrigerate if not serving the soup the day the pasta is made. Do not cook or store pasta in the soup, or it will get mushy and soak up all your broth; add it to the bottom of the bowl and serve the soup over it.

For the soup:

- 1 onion, diced
- 6-8 skinless chicken thighs and/or legs (no white meat, as it gets too dry)
- 2 cans of low-salt chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 Tbsp parsley
- 2 Tbsp salt
- 1 Tbsp ground black pepper
- Approximately 10 chicken bouillon cubes

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In a large stock pot, cook onion in olive oil, about 2-3 minutes over medium-high heat. Add chicken and brown on all sides, seasoning with salt and pepper. Add chicken broth, parsley and enough water to fill the pot $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way. Lower heat, cover and cook chicken for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Do not overcook the chicken, or it will get stringy and dry.

Remove chicken and cool; remove and discard fat and bones. Cut meat into bite-sized pieces and return the meat to the water.

Add chicken bouillon cubes. Bring water to a boil, stirring occasionally to dissolve bouillon cubes. Add salt and pepper (if needed) to taste. Cook approximately 15 minutes more to blend flavors.

When stock is flavored to your liking, you're ready to add the other ingredients (except the pasta). However, do not do this step until you're ready to serve the soup. You can make and refrigerate all ingredients separately a couple of days ahead, if desired.

To combine ingredients and finish the soup:

Bring stock, chicken meat and meatballs to a boil and cook for 10 minutes to heat meatballs through.

Add escarole greens. Cook 5-7 minutes until greens are wilted.

To serve:

Put a couple of spoonfuls of cooked pasta in bottom of soup bowl. Add soup, making sure to include chicken, meatballs and greens with the soup stock in each bowl.

Sprinkle with grated Romano or Parmesan cheese.

Enjoy!