

Homestyle chicken noodle soup

Dak-kalguksu 닭칼국수

serves 4

I'm sharing my family's all-time favorite food with you today, chicken noodle soup – dak-kalguksu in Korean. The word *kal* means knife and *guksu* means noodle soup, indicating that the noodles in this soup are made by cutting them from the dough.

There are many kinds of kalguksu, but this version is made with chicken (*dak* in Korean). The noodles are made from scratch, which makes this dish very special and welcome in any home. You can picture a housewife kneading dough, the chicken broth boiling in a huge pot on the stove behind her, giving off a great aroma, filling the whole house, and her family excited about the upcoming noodle soup.

"Mom, is it ready yet??"

"Can I help you knead the dough?"

This dish always reminds me of good times with my relatives, siblings, parents, neighbors, and friends. Kalguksu is a very social dish and this is something we used to make when we had a lot of people over. Everyone could pitch in and help, especially to make the noodles.

In this recipe I use a half cup of starch in the dough, which is optional and can be replaced with flour. But you should use starch because it makes a big difference in the noodles. There's a great kalguksu place here in New York City that has chewy and firm noodles that never go soggy no matter how long they're in the broth. I couldn't figure out how they did it! Of course I did a lot of experiments at home and discovered that a bit of starch did the trick. If you're a hardcore cook & noodle lover, you'll absolutely be able to tell the difference between noodles made with starch and without.

This recipe serves 4, but if you want to make 2 servings, just use only half the dough this time, and keep the other half in the fridge for more kalguksu or something else. Divide the chicken stock, too, and keep half in the fridge for later.

Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1 pound chicken breast
- 16 cups water
- 16 peeled garlic cloves (about ½ cup)
- 1 medium onion, cut into quarters

- 3½ cup all-purpose flour, plus ⅓ cup flour to dust
- ½ cup potato starch
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 ¼ cup water

- 1 medium zucchini, cut into matchsticks (about 1½ cup) + ¼ teaspoon salt
- vegetable oil
- toasted sesame oil
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce (or soup soy sauce)
- ground black pepper
- 2 green onions, chopped

Directions

Start the broth:

1. Put water, chicken breast, garlic, and onion in a large stock pot and boil for 1 hour over high heat.

While it boils, make the noodle dough:

2. Combine flour, starch, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, and 1¼ cup water in a large bowl.
3. Mix with a wooden spoon to form a lump. Knead it by hand until it forms a ball. Put it into a plastic bag, seal it, and let it sit in the fridge or on the kitchen counter for 10 minutes.
4. Take the dough out of the plastic bag, knead it for 2 to 5 minutes, and then put it back in. Kneading it in stages like this, and storing it in the plastic bag between sessions will make it soft and pliable with minimum effort.

Prepare the zucchini:

5. Combine the zucchini matchsticks with ¼ teaspoon kosher salt and set aside for 5 to 10 minutes.
6. Squeeze the excess water out by hand and sautee with a few drops of vegetable oil in a pan. Set aside.

Finish the stock:

1. After an hour of boiling, remove from the heat. Strain. The stock will be about 13 cups at this point and it should look clear but a little milky.
2. Add 1 tablespoon kosher salt and 2 teaspoons fish sauce (or soup soy sauce) or to taste. Mix well and put it back to the stock pot. Set aside.

Make garlic seasoning paste:

1. Collect the cooked garlic into a small bowl and mash it with a spoon. Add 1 teaspoon kosher salt, ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, and 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil. Mix well and set aside.
2. Pull the chicken into thin strips with your fingers and mix it in with the garlic mixture. Set aside.

Make noodles:

1. Take out the dough and knead it again for a couple of minutes until it's really smooth. Divide the dough into 2 balls.
2. Dust a large cutting board or clean kitchen table with flour and put the dough on it. Roll it out with a rolling pin to a circle about 18 inches wide and 1/16 inch thick (1 or 2 mm). Flip it over occasionally to make it even, round, and flat. If you need to, sprinkle some flour on it when you flip, to keep it from sticking.
3. Evenly spread some flour on the dough, and fold it over 3 or 4 times. Cut it into thin noodles, about 1/8 inch thick. Sprinkle some flour on them, and gently mix them up to separate them and spread the flour evenly.
4. Make noodles with the other ball of dough but repeating the steps above.



Make soup:

1. Bring the stock to a boil and add the noodles. Stir with a wooden spoon and cover.
2. Cook for 4 to 6 minutes until all the noodles float and some bubbles form on the surface. Remove from the heat.
3. Ladle into large individual bowls. Put some zucchini on the center of each bowl and add some chicken. Sprinkle some chopped green onion over top, and serve immediately with kimchi and few more side dishes if you have them.



To make spicy version:

1. Combine 2 table spoons hot pepper flakes and 2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil in a small bowl. Mix well and serve. When you eat, add some of the mixture to your noodle soup and eat.