

CHICKEN-CAULIFLOWER CHOWDER

This chow-dah, easily made from refrigerator leftovers, is adaptable and quite tasty should you need to change out protein, vegetables, herbs, or seasonings. Try sliced toasted almonds for a garnish, for instance. Use more onion and no leeks. Duck instead of chicken. Skipping dairy? No problem, it's quite "milky" without it due to the cauliflower and potatoes.

- 1 tablespoon each: salted butter and olive oil
- 1 each: thinly sliced leek (white/lt. green parts only); stalk celery with leaves; large carrot; small onion, diced; clove garlic, minced
- Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon dry thyme
- Handful chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 cup dry white wine -- can sub water or broth
- 2 cups water
- 4 cups chicken broth, low sodium
- 3 cups chopped cauliflower florets (about a pound)
- Large peeled, finely diced potato or 1/2-1 cup mashed potatoes
- 1 - 2 cup(s) cooked, diced chicken, turkey, or smoked turkey
- 2 tablespoons **each** frozen peas and corn -- optional
- 1 cup whole milk
- Hot sauce to taste (start with 2-3 drops)
- Cheddar Cheese, grated for garnish
- Scallions, chopped finely for garnish

SWEAT AROMATICS ADD SPICES+HERBS: Heat the butter/oil over medium flame in a 6-qt. pot and cook the vegetables (leek, celery, carrot, onion) for several minutes until onion is translucent, adding garlic for last minute. Season with 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1/4 teaspoon pepper, thyme, and parsley. Let cook, stirring, a minute or two.

ADD LIQUIDS AND THEN CAULIFLOWER: Pour in wine and let cook until absorbed-1-2 minutes perhaps. Pour in water and broth; cover and bring to a boil. Remove lid and tip in cauliflower and diced potato. Let cook 10-12 minutes or until cauliflower and potato pieces are all really fork tender. If you like, you can mash them a little or a lot with a potato masher or fork. If using leftover mashed potatoes, wait until the cauliflower is cooked and add them with the chicken in the next step, stirring or mashing very well to incorporate and letting them cook a minute or two to thicken the chowder.

STIR IN CHICKEN/ADD MILK AT END: Stir in the diced chicken along with the peas and corn, if using, and cook 2-3 minutes until everything is hot. Pour in milk and heat through. Taste and adjust seasonings, adding hot sauce to taste.

SERVE HOT: Serve hot garnished with cheese and scallions.

Cook's Note: If you'd like a thicker chowder, whisk in 2 tablespoons all purpose, unbleached flour into the cold milk before stirring it in. Let the chowder cook just 2 or 3 minutes to thicken.

WINE: Maybe you have a bit of California Chardonnay or White Burgundy left lying around. That's what I'd pour.