

THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES



Tomato Soup with Pasta and Meatballs (adapted from *America's Test Kitchen Light and Healthy 2011*)

4 servings

My meatballs ended up looking more like chicken-flavored pesto than pesto-flavored chicken, which might be because my homemade pesto has less oil (and therefore more basil per volume) than store-bought versions. Still, I've increased the chicken slightly. The soup could use more meatballs anyway.

I've probably made this slightly less healthy by increasing the pasta, but the original amount (4 ounces) was just a tease.

I usually cook with canned whole tomatoes instead of diced, because they break down more. I just chop them by sticking a pair of kitchen shears in the can and snipping away.

Meatballs:

8 ounces ground dark chicken (or a mix of dark and light meat)
3 tablespoons pesto
3 tablespoons fresh bread crumbs
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon salt

Soup:

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, diced
1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1 large celery rib, diced
Salt
3 cloves garlic, minced
 $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes or whole tomatoes, chopped
6 ounces uncooked small pasta, such as ditalini or alphabet noodles

1. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the chicken, pesto, bread crumbs, and salt. Mix thoroughly, then form into approximately forty $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch balls. Chill until needed.
2. In a 3- or 4-quart saucepan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, and $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes, then uncover and cook until the mixture is dry, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add the chicken broth and tomatoes; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes to blend the flavors. Taste for seasoning and add salt if necessary.
3. Use an immersion blender to puree the soup, or transfer it in batches to a stand-up blender to puree, then return the soup to the pot. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat and add the meatballs and pasta. Cook, stirring frequently, until the noodles are tender and the meatballs are cooked through, about 10 minutes. Serve.