

Nutrition News & Healthy Recipes For California Grey Bears

So, I was row, row, rowing my boat *gently* down the stream, minding my own business, when a mighty wind came down from the north and spun my rig and me topsy-turvy. “Wow, what was that?” I asked myself. Then I remembered that it was April-May tornado season. And although I don’t live in a tornado corridor, like my sister does, I’ve learned from Chinese tradition that it’s important to avoid blowing winds at all cost. May is here and don’t let her sweet face fool you. There are a few more windy weeks ahead.

In his novel, *The Eight Promise*, William Poy Lee tells about his mother’s seventh promise to his grandmother which was to cook the traditional Ch’i energy soups for her new family to be. These traditional Toisan soups protect a person’s inner Ch’i and his/her outer energy body.

As with other passages in life, like pregnancy or childbirth, a ‘change-of-seasons wind’ can upset a person’s internal Ch’i energy. It can get depleted and make holes in one’s outer energy body leaving a person ‘open’ to sickness and disease. The Toisan learned the importance of nurturing the invisible Ch’i bodies. May is one of those times that the Toisan mothers must cook the special season-change Ch’i adjustment soups.

“These soups are like medicine AND they taste delicious. If eaten regularly, Ch’i energy soups will keep you strong and healthy.”

What do these soups have in common? ...powerful herbs and spices.

Some of the most common tonic herbs are: onions, garlic, ginger, turmeric, and chilies. I routinely throw mushrooms onto this list, since they are quite medicinal, offering the body some awesome remediation. So, yes, each of these recipes includes three or more of these herbs along with other spices to add flavor and sweetness. “Not sweet like sugar, but sweetly delicious from all the juices of the herbs...mixing together over a hot fire (says Lee’s grandmother).”

Miso Soup – serves 2-3

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon ginger, finely chopped
1 Tablespoon garlic, finely chopped
1 Tablespoon lemon grass, finely chopped
3 cups vegetable stock or water
12 oz. tofu diced into 1/2 “ cubes
10 oz. white or brown miso paste
(unpasteurized, organic)

1 additional cup of stock or water
1-2 Tablespoons seasoned rice vinegar (optional)
1 Tablespoon Scallions finely chopped

Directions: Simmer ginger, garlic, lemon grass in 3 cups stock or water. Add tofu and heat for 2-4 minutes. Mix miso, 1 more cup stock/water, and vinegar in a small bowl. Add to broth and heat, but do not boil after adding the miso. Garnish with scallions

Tonic Soup serves 4-6

Ingredients:

8 cups vegetable broth
1 onion, diced
4 – 8 cloves garlic, minced
1-2” piece of fresh gingerroot, peeled/finely chopped
1 cup sliced carrots (2 carrots)
1 slice astragalus root (Chinese market, herb store)
1 cup shiitake mushrooms, sliced
1 cup broccoli flowerets

Directions: Bring vegetable broth to a boil in a large pot. Meanwhile, water sauté* onion, ginger, and lastly garlic until soft and aromatic.

Add sautéed mixture to the broth along with carrots, astragalus root, and shiitake mushrooms. Simmer, covered for 1 hour. Add the broccoli flowerets in the last 5 minutes, and remove astragalus before serving.

* How To Sauté Vegetables Without Oil:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Sv1wXU_gLo

Hot and Sour Soup serves 4-6

Ingredients:

2 cup veggie stock
1-2 Thai hot chilies (small varieties, fresh or dried)
1-2 stalk(s) lemon grass, cut into 1" pieces and crushed with back of knife (to be removed later).
10 thin slices galangal (Staff of Life, Whole Foods, New Leaf Market (to be removed later.)
5 Kaffir lime leaves (to be removed later)

Hot and Sour Soup continued

1 cup more stock as necessary
1/2 cup coconut, large or small flake
1 cup veggies (tomatoes, stick carrots, cubed yams, etc....be seasonally creative)
1 cup mushrooms (shitake, miatake, portabella)
1 cup fresh pod peas/sugar snaps
1 cup coconut milk
1 Tablespoon Bragg's Liquid Aminos /soy sauce)
2 1/2 Tablespoons lime juice
1 1/2 Tablespoons chili paste (Thai Kitchen brand is available in stores)
Cilantro leaves

Directions: Simmer first 5 ingredients together for 20-30 minutes:

Strain out all herbs, then add coconut, veggies, mushrooms and simmer for 10-15 minutes, until yams are al dente. Add more stock to make sure you still have 'soup.' Add the peas and turn down heat. Cook for two minutes only.

Mix the coconut milk, Bragg's Liquid Aminos, lime juice, chili paste together in a small bowl. Then add to soup. Taste, adjust seasonings making sure it is hot enough to serve and enjoy
Garnish with cilantro leaves

Do not boil after adding coconut milk.

After many years of bailing myself out after being sick, I now head for firm ground by regularly preparing such tonics 6-10 times a year. These Ch'i, or energy soups, boost my inner strength and protect my core balance. They are regulars in my soup file.

Nota Buena: When the wind is up wear scarves to cover the back of the neck and vests/or sashes to cover the lower back. These are spots where the wind easily enters the body!

Thank you for your creative suggestions, tips, and topics.

Food for Life Nutrition & Cooking Classes - Eating for Disease Prevention

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