

Clam and Daikon Radish Restorative Soup

Moody Mondays: March is a tricky month. She teases us with milder days, only to turn arctic again the next. You may want to put away the puffer jacket, but don't put away this soup recipe. Most cultures have a soup that's widely accepted to have the power to restore body and soul, and usually most of the magic is credited to grandmas. The Chinese have been simmering soothing soups for centuries, utilizing the same ingredients found in their ancient medicines. Things like goji berries, ginger and daikon radish are believed to strengthen the immune system and battle what ails you. The goji berries are also rich in beta carotene and antioxidants. This version is a Taiwanese healing soup, with a touch of brine from the clams, and it's pretty traditional. Well, until we added coppa, but come on! It's perfect with the clams! You can put this together in almost no time on any weeknight you're dragging.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 ounces thinly sliced sweet coppa, 12 slices left whole, remaining slices cut into 1/4-inch strips
1-inch ginger piece, rinsed and cut into coins; plus a 2-inch piece cut in 1/4-inch julienne
2 scallions, white parts cut into 2-inch segments, light and dark green parts thinly sliced on a bias
1 pound daikon radish, trimmed, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
1/2 cup goji berries (see Cook's Note)
24 littleneck clams, scrubbed clean
Kosher salt and ground white pepper

special equipment

Sturdy brush for scrubbing clams

Directions

Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat and fry the whole coppa slices until almost crispy, about 1 minute, turning once. Transfer the crisp coppa to a paper-towel-lined plate, setting aside. Remove oil in pot leaving behind 1 tablespoon. In same pot, cook the sliced coppa strips, stirring occasionally, for about 30 seconds. Add the ginger coins and white scallion segments and cook for another 30 seconds, stirring, until fragrant. Add 8 cups of water to the pot and bring to a boil. Add the radish to the water, return to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes.

Bring the water back to a boil over high heat and add the goji berries and clams. Boil for 3 to 5 minutes, covered, or until clams open. Discard any clam that doesn't open. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and white pepper. Discard the scallion segments and ginger coins.

To serve, evenly divide the julienned ginger in each of 6 soup bowls. Ladle a portion of soup with clams into bowl, sprinkle with the thinly sliced scallion greens and place 2 slices of crispy

coppa slices beside each bowl. The coppa can be crumbled into soup or dipped into the broth and eaten as a decadent chip.

Cook's Notes

Goji berries can be found at health food stores with the dried foods. Leftover berries can be used as a healthy tea. Just pour boiling water into mug with 1 tablespoon of the berries and steep for 15 minutes.

total time: 35 minutes

active prep: 10 minutes

serves: 6 servings

difficulty: *easy*