



SHIKSA MATZO BALL SOUP

Ingredients

1 whole chicken or chicken pieces, 4-5 pounds total (no giblets)
6 celery stalks with leaves, chopped into thirds
6 whole carrots, peeled and chopped into thirds
1 large brown onion rinsed and halved, outer skin intact
5 sprigs of fresh curly-leafed parsley
1 tbsp whole black peppercorns
1/2 tbsp whole cloves
2 bay leaves
1/2 bunch of fresh dill, lower stems removed
Kosher or sea salt to taste
Matzo ball mix (I prefer Manischewitz)
Vegetable oil or [schmaltz](#)
Eggs

Note: Check package to determine how many eggs and the amount of oil/schmaltz you will need for 10-12 matzo balls. If making a larger pot of soup, prepare two packages of matzo ball mix, for about 20 matzo balls.

You will also need: stockpot, strainer

Serves 6-12, depending on the size of your stock pot.

Kosher Key: Meat, Kosher for Passover

Rinse the chicken and place it in a tall stockpot. Cover the chicken with water, reserving about 3 inches of space at the top of the pot. Bring to a slow boil over medium high heat. As the chicken cooks, a fatty foam will start to rise. Skim this foam from the surface. Add celery, carrots, onion, parsley, peppercorns, cloves, bay leaves, and a few sprigs of the dill to the pot. Add 1 tbsp of salt, then stir till all the vegetables are moistened and simmering in the broth. Cover pot, reduce heat to medium, and allow pot to simmer for two hours. Mince the remaining dill and set aside.

After the soup has simmered for two hours, allow it to cool for 30 minutes. While soup is cooling, prepare the matzo ball mix according to package directions. I like to use schmaltz instead of vegetable oil to bind the balls. Sometimes I add a couple of tablespoons of the minced fresh dill into the mix. Place prepared matzo ball mix in the refrigerator.

Strain the broth with a mesh strainer. Pull meat from the chicken in bite-sized pieces and return to the broth. Return vegetables to the broth, if desired. Add the remaining minced dill to the stockpot, then return the soup to a slow simmer. Taste the broth. Add more salt, if desired. Be sure to add slowly, don't over-salt!

Remove prepared matzo ball mix from refrigerator. Form mixture into about a dozen 1 inch balls and place gently into the simmering soup. Don't make the balls too large, they will expand a lot in the broth.

Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 30 minutes more, or until matzo balls have fully expanded. When soup is finished, stir gently to separate any dill that might have gathered on the surface of the soup.

Serve with two or three matzo balls and some chicken pieces in each soup bowl. Garnish with a lemon slice, if desired. My family likes lots of lemon juice squeezed in! If you don't plan on serving the whole pot of soup at one sitting, make sure you remove the matzo balls from the broth and refrigerate them in a separate container. Otherwise they'll turn mushy.

Hint: To make straining easier, tie up all the stock ingredients tightly in a few layers of cheesecloth before covering with water. When the stock has finished cooking, just remove the cheesecloth and unwrap the chicken. You can also cook the stock in a steel multi-pot with a mesh strainer insert (fine mesh—strainers with large holes will let the spices seep through). Both of these methods will allow you to skip straining the broth into another pot!

For food photographs and step-by-step instructions, please visit <http://www.theshiksa.com>.

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