

Chicken soup with lime leaf, lemongrass and coconut recipe by Claire Thomson

If you like the sour, fragrant flavours of Thai tom kah gai , you'll love this version of the popular soup

This soup is based on a tom kah gai or tom kah kai, a sour, fragrant soup made with chicken, coconut milk, lime leaves, lemongrass and fresh chilli. It is simply delicious – all at once vibrant and refreshing, soothing and restorative. I have eaten similar soups to this on various trips to Thailand, but also in Cambodia and Laos. I swear it is the best chicken soup I'll eat.

Serves 4

chicken stock 1.5 litres

lime leaves 4, thinly sliced

lemongrass stalks 3, trimmed and cut into thirds

bird's-eye red or green chillies 3-6, ½ thinly sliced, ½ left whole, to taste

fresh galangal 4 slices (or ginger)

coriander ½ small bunch, leaves chopped and stalks separated

cherry tomatoes 150g, cut in half

full-fat coconut milk 200ml

chicken 400g, boneless, skinless (thigh is best), diced

small button mushrooms 150g

limes juice of 2

fish sauce 2 tbsp, plus more to taste

Heat the chicken stock in a large pot over a high heat.

Meanwhile, bruise the lime leaves, lemongrass, whole chillies, galangal (or ginger) and coriander stalks in a mortar and pestle (or use a bowl and the end of a rolling pin), then add them along with the tomatoes to the hot stock and simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the coconut milk, chicken and mushrooms, bring the liquid back to a boil, then reduce the heat to moderate and cook for about 5-8 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through.

Remove from the heat and add the sliced chillies, lime juice, fish sauce and chopped coriander leaves, adjusting with more of each, to your taste. Serve ladled into bowls immediately.