

DRIED MUSHROOM SOUP

A chef friend of ours often generously gifts us with a mishmash of ingredients that he over ordered. The latest to hit our shelves is a big bag of dried mushrooms and some rice noodles. Do I hear soup? Here's a tasty dish using Asian spices.

INGREDIENTS (serves 4)

2 cups of thinly sliced dried Chinese mushrooms

2 star anise

1 cinnamon stick

2 cardomon pods

6 coriander seeds

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1 bay leaf

2 tablespoons canola oil

2 shallots chopped

12 fresh shiitake mushrooms sliced

2 cloves of garlic minced

1" knob of ginger minced

1 cup cooked chicken, cubed in $\frac{1}{2}$ " pieces

2 cups of baby spinach

1 quart of chicken bone broth or vegetable broth

1 tablespoon of soy sauce

1 tablespoon of mirin

1 teaspoon of fish sauce

1 package of rice noodles

basil leaves for garnish

salt and pepper to taste

PREPARATION

Soak the dried mushrooms in a medium sized bowl of warm water for 30 minutes. Slice the mushrooms and reserve the water.

Place the star anise, cinnamon stick, cardamon pods, coriander seeds, red pepper flakes and bay leaf into a sachet with a string, or use a piece of cheesecloth and tie some butchers twine around it. Set aside.

In a medium sized dutch oven, heat the oil. Add the shallots and cook until translucent, about three minutes. Add the fresh mushrooms, garlic and ginger. Saute for two to three minutes. Add in the cooked chicken and spinach and stir for one minute.

Pour in the bone broth and the dried mushrooms with the mushroom water. Add the spice sachet, soy sauce, mirin and fish sauce. Bring to a boil and then simmer for twenty minutes.

Add in the rice noodles and cook as per the package instructions. Do not add additional liquid. Remove the spice sachet. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

To serve, ladle into soup bowls. Garnish with basil leaves.