

# Coconut Lemon Chicken Soup

## *Nqaij Qaib Hau Xyaw Kua Mav Phaib Qaub*

This chicken soup is quick to make, and has a tongue-pleasing combination of mildly sweet, salty, and tart flavors. Note: Coconut milk separates in the can, so be sure to stir it until the consistency is uniform before measuring.

### INGREDIENTS

- ½ boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 cups cubed chayote squash
- 1 lemon
- 2½ cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 inch fresh ginger root, sliced
- 3 tablespoons fish sauce
- 3 tablespoons minced lemongrass, tough outer leaves and root removed before mincing
- 1 cup coconut milk
- Fresh cilantro sprigs, for garnish

### PREPARATION

Cut the chicken and squash into ½-inch cubes and set aside. Wash the whole lemon and cut in half. Cut one half into eight wedges. Shave thin strips of lemon peel from the other half and cut them into very thin matchsticks, for garnish. In a 3-quart saucepan, combine the chicken broth, lemon wedges, sliced ginger, and fish sauce. Turn the heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain the soup and return it to the pan, discarding the solids. Bring it back to a simmer, then add the chayote and lemongrass. Cook for 10 minutes, until the squash is soft but not mushy. Add the chicken and coconut milk. Cook for 2 to 3 more minutes, or until the chicken becomes opaque. Serve this soup in individual bowls, garnished with cilantro sprigs and the lemon peel shavings.



# Three-Color Dessert

## *Nab Vam*

The following recipe is adapted from a more complex recipe that serves 30 to 40 people. This version is good for everyday use, because it begins with what is best described as a “*nab vam kit*” that you can buy at some Asian grocery stores. These plastic bags usually include premade starch strings and sometimes sweet corn or soybeans and sweetened coconut milk. Strips and small cubes of agar-agar gelatin can be used instead of the starch strings.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 package medium-sized tapioca pearls, bright or pastel colors
- 2 packages ready-made starch strings in coconut milk
- 3 or 4 kinds of fresh or canned fruit (jackfruit, palm nuts, coconut jelly, young coconut, attap fruit, or fresh fruit or melons), cut into bite-sized pieces, to equal about 6 cups
- 5 cups small ice cubes

### PREPARATION

Make sugar syrup by cooking the sugar over medium-low heat until it melts and becomes a caramel color. Add the water and mix until the sugar is completely dissolved. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Cook the tapioca pearls according to package instructions. Then drain them and rinse gently in a sieve under tap water until the water runs clear. Transfer to a bowl. Cover the tapioca with the syrup. Open the canned fruit, and drain and discard the liquid. Cut large chunks into bite-sized pieces. With a melon baller, scoop the melon into little balls. Pour the starch strings in coconut milk into a large bowl. Add the tapioca pearls and the fruit. Then add the ice cubes. Ladle into individual bowls to serve.