



Chinese Immune Herb Chicken Soup

In China it is common to throw tonic herbs in soup to enhance immunity, longevity, and general good health. The root herbs **Astragalus**, **Codonopsis** and **Dioscorea** are general Qi tonics, benefitting digestion, nutrient absorption, cardiac function and enhanced energy. **Lycium** and **Longan** are blood tonics and enhance calming. **Wood Ear** alleviates dryness and benefits circulation. **Lotus Seed** is a mild tonic and sedative. **Polygonatum** is a yin tonic and restores moisture to dry membranes. **Sargassum** is a yin tonic and relieves swelling.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs Chicken, skinless with bones -OR- 1 lb Tofu, added with the vegetables
- 1 packet Chinese Immune Herbs
- 2 cloves Garlic, crushed
- 2 slices fresh Ginger
- 1 tsp Salt
- Fresh vegetables as desired: Carrots, Celery, Green Onion, Leafy Greens, Squash
- 1 Tbsp Soy Sauce/Tamari -OR- 3 Tbsp Miso Paste
- 1 Tsp Sesame Oil
- 1 Tsp Wine or mild Vinegar

Makes 4 hearty servings.

To make the soup, place Chicken in a medium sized pot and add enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and remove any residue that floats to the top at that time.

Add the whole package of herbs, crushed Garlic, fresh Ginger, and Salt. The amount of each can be adjusted to your own taste - the amounts given provide a mild flavor. Bring back to a slow boil, cover and simmer for 50 minutes or longer. You can also use a Crockpot, Instant Pot, or any slow cooker on the slow cook setting.

Add sliced fresh vegetables such as Carrots and Celery (for a more warming effect, use Green Onions), Leafy Greens, and Squash; if substituting Chicken with Tofu, add it now. Simmer again for 10-15 minutes to soften, then add Soy Sauce/Tamari or Miso Paste, Sesame Oil, and Wine or mild Vinegar. Remove from heat and serve.

All the herbal material is edible except Astragalus, the thinly sliced flat herb which will remain firm with a woody appearance. For individuals recovering from a debilitating illness or experience, the soup can be taken daily for about a week to help restore strength. Others may enjoy a bowl a week for nourishing the blood and getting a boost of energy.



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Traditional Chinese Concepts of Soup Ingredients

The mention of organs or Blood, Qi, etc. are traditional Chinese descriptions as translated from Chinese, not the Western definition or purpose in a Western sense of that organ. Spleen does not refer to making white blood cells, but is instead often tied to aspects of digestion. Main organs are paired and are associated with a meridian. The meridians are representative of an energy, and are labeled after these organs. Below are some references that can be used to understand the physiology and energetics of the ingredients used in Chinese Medicine.

- **Chicken:** Taste is sweet, nature is warm, benefits spleen and stomach. The meat nourishes Qi and blood and tonifies the kidney and essence. It is used therapeutically for blood deficiency, emaciation and persistent illness.
- **Tofu:** Cooling, lubricating, and benefits the spleen and stomach.
- **Miso:** Sweet and salty, of a neutral nature and benefits the stomach, spleen and kidney.
 - Miso and Tofu are used to treat disharmony of the stomach, with loss of appetite, diarrhea, and abdominal discomfort.
- **Garlic:** Pungent and sweet, warm, and benefits spleen, stomach and lungs. Promotes digestion (especially of meats) and is helpful in treating coughing due to lung infections.
- **Carrot:** Sweet and neutral. Benefits spleen, liver and lung. Used for indigestion, vision and cough with fever.
- **Squash:** Sweet and cooling, benefits spleen, stomach, lung and is used for coughing and promoting urination.
- **Celery:** Pungent and sweet, cooling in nature. Benefits liver, stomach and bladder. Used for fever, agitation and loss of appetite.
- **Greens:** Slightly astringent, cool and benefit spleen and liver.
- **Green Onion:** Pungent and warm. Benefits stomach and lungs. Used for dispersing chill, relieving congestion and relaxing muscle tension.

Herbal Ingredients

- **Astragalus:** Taste is sweet, nature is mildly warm, and it benefits the spleen and lung. It is used for all kinds of Qi deficiency syndromes, especially when there is excessive sweating.
- **Codonopsis:** Taste is sweet, nature is mildly warm, and it benefits the lung and spleen. It is used for all types of Qi deficiency syndromes, especially when there is weak digestion. It is commonly used by Chinese herbalists as a substitute for Ginseng.
- **Dioscorea (Chinese Yam):** Taste is sweet, nature is mildly warm, and it benefits the spleen, lung, and kidney. It is used for treatment of diarrhea and frequent urination.
- **Lycium (Goji Berry):** Taste is sweet, nature is neutral, and it benefits the liver and kidney. It is used for weakness due to overwork and aging, for weak vision, and for chronic cough.
- **Longan:** Taste is sweet, nature is warm, and it benefits the heart and spleen. It is used for deficiency of blood, with poor memory, heart palpitations, and weakness.
- **Wood Ear (Black Fungus):** Taste is sweet, nature is neutral, and it benefits the lung, stomach, and liver. It is used for dry cough, dry throat and mouth, and for other symptoms of dryness.
- **Lotus Seed:** Taste is sweet and astringent, nature is neutral, and it benefits the spleen, kidney, and heart. It is used for loss of appetite and diarrhea due to weak digestion, for frequent urination, and for restlessness.
- **Polygonatum (Solomon's Seal):** Taste is sweet, nature is mildly cold, and it benefits the lung and stomach. It is used for any kind of yin-deficiency syndrome, typically manifesting as fidgeting, dry mouth and throat, and dry cough.
- **Sargassum (Seaweed):** Taste is salty, nature is cold, and it benefits the stomach, liver, and kidney. It is used to dissolve phlegm and relieve swelling.