

MINNESOTA WILD RICE SOUP (Manoomin soup)

Serves 6 to 8

Note: To toast almonds, place nuts in a dry skillet over medium heat, and cook, stirring (or shaking the pan frequently) until they just begin to release their fragrance, about 2 to 3 minutes.

1 cup raw Minnesota wild rice
4 tablespoons (1/2 stick) unsalted butter
1 yellow onion, diced
1 1/2 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
2 large or 3 small carrots, peeled and diced
3 ribs celery, diced
2 bay leaves
6 cups low-sodium chicken stock
2 cups chopped or pulled roasted chicken, skin and bones removed
1/4 cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons white wine (or 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar)
2 teaspoons salt
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon freshly chopped thyme leaves
2 tablespoons freshly chopped flat-leaf parsley
1/4 cup slivered almonds, toasted (See note above)

To prepare wild rice: When cooked, wild rice generally triples in volume. Varieties differ, so follow cooking instructions on package. Place 1 cup wild rice in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse under hot tap water for 30 seconds. Add rinsed wild rice to 3 cups water in a saucepan over high heat and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and simmer until rice has absorbed the liquid and is tender, 15 to 20 minutes for hand-harvested wild rice, about 60 minutes for commercially harvested wild rice. Remove from heat and reserve.

To prepare soup: In a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and sauté until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, carrots and celery, and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add bay leaves and chicken stock. Increase heat to high, bring to a boil, then decrease heat to low and simmer for 20 minutes. Add cooked wild rice, chicken, cream, white wine (or white wine vinegar), salt, pepper and thyme. Stir, and cook until warmed through, about 5 minutes.

Remove bay leaves. Taste and adjust seasonings as necessary. Ladle into bowls, garnish with parsley and almonds, and serve hot.

Nutrition information per each of 8 servings: 290 calories, 14 g fat, 705 mg sodium, 24 g carbohydrates, 6 g saturated fat, 3 g total sugars, 18 g protein, 50 mg cholesterol, 3 g dietary fiber

Exchanges per serving: 1 1/2 starch, 2 lean protein, 1 1/2 fat.