



INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 1.3kg chicken
- 1 small brown onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 2 teaspoons castor sugar
- 5cm piece ginger, finely sliced
- Salt flakes, to taste
- ¾ cup (150g) jasmine rice
- 1 tablespoon deep-fried shallots
- 3 green onions, sliced
- Coriander sprigs, for serving
- Fish sauce, for serving
- Pickled minced red chilli, for serving

Vietnamese Chicken Rice Soup

Every culture seems to have a chicken soup that's the universal panacea, and in Vietnam it's cháo gà. Similar to Chinese congee, it's generally a breakfast dish - often served with omelette. It's also traditionally served to anyone who's feeling poorly, especially with a cold or upset stomach. I love it at any time. As this dish is clearly inspired by Chinese congee, feel free to add some of the Chinese fried bread sticks, called dầu cháo quẩy in Vietnamese.

Serves 6 as an entrée

METHOD

1. Wipe out the belly cavity of the chicken with a clean damp cloth to remove any remaining offal or blood.
2. Place chicken in a saucepan large enough to hold it snugly. Add onion, fish sauce, sugar, ginger, salt and just enough cold water to completely cover it (around 3 litres).
3. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes, skimming to remove any froth that floats to the top.
4. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for 45 minutes.
5. Remove chicken from the poaching liquid, draining the cavity, and set aside to cool.
6. Meanwhile, strain the poaching liquid through a cloth-lined sieve. Set aside 2.5 litres and freeze the rest for another dish. If there's less than 2.5 litres of poaching liquid, top up with water.
7. Place a large clean saucepan over low heat, add rice and stir for a few minutes until it starts to smell toasty.
8. Add the reserved poaching liquid, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 25-30 minutes, until rice is very tender.
9. Meanwhile shred the meat from the chicken and set aside, discarding the skin and bones.
10. Stir chicken meat through the soup, taste and add salt.
11. Ladle into serving bowls, top with deep-fried shallots, green onion and coriander and serve with fish sauce and pickled minced red chilli on the side.