



## Cock-a-Leekie

Cock-a-leekie is a traditional Scottish soup. From humble origins, using an old hen past its laying days and the most basic vegetables in the croft garden, it now often appears on festive menus like Burns' Suppers. The name lists the key ingredients – a cock (or chicken) plus leeks – though makes no mention of the more unusual, and sometimes controversial, addition of prunes.

**Serves 2-4 as a starter**



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 large or 2 medium-sized leeks, trimmed (about 450g/16oz total weight)
- 2 sprigs thyme
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 3 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
- 1 x chicken Maryland
- 1 litre cold water (2 pints)
- Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 30g butter (1oz)
- 4 prunes, pitted and finely sliced
- Baps or other white rolls, for serving

### METHOD

1. Cut 2 long slices through most of the leek lengthways, leaving just the green part intact to hold it together.
2. Wash thoroughly then cut into 1cm-thick ( $\frac{1}{2}$ " ) slices, keeping the green and white parts separate; wash green part again if it's still dirty.
3. Tie thyme, bay leaf and 2 sprigs of parsley together with a piece of kitchen twine to form a bouquet garni. Finely chop remaining parsley leaves, cover and set aside for garnish.
4. Place chicken into a saucepan with the water, adding a little more if necessary to completely cover it.
5. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat to low and skim off any froth that's floated to the top.
6. Add bouquet garni, 1 tablespoon (10g/ $\frac{1}{3}$ oz) of salt and the green part of the leek.
7. Increase heat, return to the boil, then reduce heat to as low as possible, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside, covered, for 10 minutes or so (longer is OK).
8. Meanwhile, melt butter in a frying pan over low heat.