

Frank's Roasted Chicken Bisque

Smothered crispy bacon, a succulent white French gravy, perfectly roasted chicken, a splash of wine, and the precise blend of authentic New Orleans spics—when they all come together harmoniously they create one of the tastiest bowls of roasted chicken bisque you ever savored!

10 oz. lean centercut bacon + pan drippings
1/2 stick butter + 1/4 stick butter
1/4 to 1/3 cup all purpose flour
1 cup onions, finely diced
1/2 cup celery, finely diced
1/2 cup bell pepper, finely diced
4 cloves fresh garlic, minced
3 qts. chicken stock (more or less, as needed)
1 qt. heavy whipping cream
1/2 cup dry white wine
2 tsp. salt or Frank Davis Sprinkling Spice
1/2 tsp. white pepper
1/4 tsp. red pepper
1/4 tsp. sweet basil
1/8 tsp. dill
4 cups Idaho potatoes, medium diced
1 whole oven-roasted chicken, large diced
1/4 cup Italian parsley, minced
1/2 cup green onions, sliced
Dash paprika for garnish

First, take the bacon and a sharp knife and cut the slices into small pieces. Then, using a heavy 5-quart, enamel-coated or stainless steel Dutch oven, fry down the bacon over a medium flame until it renders out and becomes crispy. When the pieces are cooked, remove them from the pot with a slotted spoon, leaving the pan drippings, and set them aside on a couple of sheets of paper towel to drain.

Next, combine the stick of butter with the pan drippings, gradually whisk in the flour, and over low heat make a light French roux (*under no circumstances should you allow the roux to brown*). After the raw taste has been cooked out of the flour (which should take about six minutes or so), drop into the mixture all the seasoning vegetables—the onions, celery, bell pepper, and garlic—and fold them in thoroughly.

At his point, it's time to begin building your bisque.

To the roux in the Dutch oven, pour in the chicken stock, the heavy cream and the wine. Be sure to stir the mixture constantly as the liquids are added so that the butter roux transforms into a creamy, smooth, silky consistency. (Note: For an extra thick bisque, add less chicken stock; for a lighter bisque, add a little more chicken stock). Now is also the time to add the seasonings—the sprinkling spice, the peppers, the sweet basil, and the dill—along with the cooked bacon, the potatoes, and the diced roasted chicken.

Now cover the pot and begin simmering the bisque over a low to medium-low flame, stirring occasionally to ensure that the cream and roux doesn't scorch on the bottom of the pot. Ideally, you want it to cook for about 35 to 40 minutes.

Finally, about 10 minutes before you're ready to eat, gently fold in the parsley. This is also the time to adjust the thickness of the bisque if it is not to your liking, and the easiest way to do that is to add a can or two of *creamed corn*. (*By the way, creamed corn can also be substituted in place of heavy cream to reduce the caloric or cholesterol value of the bisque*). You should also readjust the seasonings at this time.

When you're ready to serve, gently swish in the remaining quarter stick of butter and ladle out generous portions of the bisque in deep soup bowls, garnished with a sprinkling of sliced green onions and a dash of paprika for color, and presented alongside a stack of buttered multigrain crackers! This is one of those original kinds of recipes that once you cook it you'll cook it over and over again!

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Chef's Notes:

1. You can use any brand of chicken stock in this recipe, both regular and low-sodium or fat free.

2. If you opt to use the sprinkling spice, you might want to leave out the red and black pepper. Of course, this is purely a matter of taste, and you should taste bisque as it cooks to give it a personal touch.
3. Be aware that combining a roux with heavy cream will give you a thickened base as it cooks, so you will need to thin it to your likeness with stock to get the smoothness you want. Ideally, good bisque has the final consistency of a rich melted ice cream or a somewhat-thinned pancake batter. Whatever you do, don't turn it into a "soup!"
4. The chickens should be pre-seasoned with salt, pepper, and poultry seasoning prior to roasting. Ideal roasting temperature is 350 degrees; correct time is approximately 1 hour. They can be done a day or two in advance and kept in the refrigerator to speed up the recipe preparation. Simply pick the meat off the bones, chop it into chunks, and fold it into the bisque. Drippings from the roasting pan can also be incorporated into the bisque to pique the flavor.
5. Canned creamed corn is an optional ingredient in this recipe, but I suggest you always keep one on hand in the pantry to "quick fix" a bisque when needed.