

The ultimate comfort food: Chicken and dumplings

By Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

When people ask me “Why are you so weird?” I always look them square in the eye and say, “It is because I was raised without chicken and dumplings.”

My mother is a wonderful cook and a woman of many accomplishments, and I’m not just saying that because she reads my columns. But for reasons unknown to me, she did not, during my childhood, make chicken and dumplings.



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS
Chicken and dumplings

part of chicken and dumplings. It is a very simple, very basic recipe for chicken soup. You simmer pieces of chicken in water with mirepoix (carrots, celery and onion), seasoned with a bit of thyme and rosemary.

That’s as far as Fannie Farmer went (or at least Marion Cunningham, who took over the editing duties so long ago that she has been dead for six years). The broth part is just a thin soup. But I like my chicken and dumplings to have a little fortitude to it — some grit, some backbone, some spirit. So I thickened it with a little cornstarch mixed with cold water. Fortitude comes cheap.

Of course, the dumplings are the star of the dish. These are worthy of the hype; these dumplings are practically divas.

They are called feather dumplings, presumably because that is how light they are. Real dumpling aficionados — those who grew up eating chicken and dumplings — know the difference between dumplings that are dropped and those that are rolled. These are dropped by the spoonful into the simmering water; not rolled out into shapes first.

CHICKEN WITH DUMPLINGS

Yield: 6 servings

For the chicken and broth

- 1 (4- to 5-pound) chicken, in 8 pieces**
2 carrots, sliced thin
2 ribs celery, sliced thin
1 large onion, chopped
1½ teaspoons dried thyme
½ teaspoon dried rosemary
2 teaspoons salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons cornstarch, optional
- For the feather dumplings
1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup bread crumbs
2 teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
1 egg, well beaten
2 tablespoons butter, melted
¼ cup finely chopped onion
1/3 cup milk
1 tablespoon finely minced parsley
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

1. Place the chicken pieces in a large pot with a lid, and cover with water. Add the carrots, celery, onion, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Cook for 20 minutes. This will make a thin broth; if you want the dish to have the consistency of gravy, mix together the cornstarch with 2 tablespoons cold water, and add to the pot. Boil 1 to 2 minutes, until thickened.
2. If you want, remove the chicken pieces after 20 minutes and shred or cut the meat off the bone. Return the meat to the pot and continue to step 3.

3. While the chicken cooks, combine the flour, bread crumbs, baking powder and salt in a mixing bowl, and stir to mix. In another bowl, lightly beat together the egg, melted butter, onion and milk. Stir in the dry ingredients to make a stiff batter. Stir in the parsley and pepper.
4. When the chicken has simmered for 20 minutes, drop spoonfuls of dough on top of the bubbling broth. Cover and steam for 20 minutes without lifting the cover. Per serving: 232 calories; 8 g

fat; 4 g saturated fat; 61 mg cholesterol; 9 g protein; 30 g carbohydrate; 5 g sugar; 3 g fiber; 1,177 mg sodium; 147 mg calcium

— Adapted from “The Fannie Farmer Cookbook,” by Marion Cunningham

PICK'N PATCH

We will be OPENING on October 5th!

Where: Corner of Booth Lane and Lower Cove Road

When: Friday and Saturday: 9am-6pm
Sunday: 10am-4pm
Monday-Thursday: By appointment

What you will find:
Small corn maze, several varieties of pumpkins and gourds, straw bales, corn stalks.

If you would like to schedule a school field trip or other event, please call the number listed below.

Like us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PickNPatchFarm](#)
[farmkidsatoregonwireless.net](#)

Please call 541-786-2421

THE MAIN PLACE
CAFÉ, GRILL, LOUNGE, HOTEL

Open Tuesday-Saturday 7-10
Closed Sunday & Monday

146 Main Street in Halfway
(541) 742-6246

See our menu at:
[www.facebook.com/TheMainPlace](#)

DORY

Continued from Page 1B

Certainly I could enjoy or frown at those belonging to everyone else, and so I did — from admiring horses in a field down the street and enjoying the parade of every variety of dogs on leashes out for their daily walks to finding my tolerance growing thin over barking dogs throughout the neighborhood. So I haven’t been without these things beyond arm’s length.

There is a stray cat that enjoys the sun rays of my yard or the shade under the bushes. We eye each other from a distance in peaceful coexistence but I never try to make a pet of it, feed or water it, or look for any reason to take it to a vet. As I said, we just coexist.

I enjoy the sight of the birds

who fly to and from my neighbor’s feeders but I didn’t even feed the squirrels or the pretty feathered things — that is, until this one day.

It was the afternoon before a thunder/lightning storm that struck in the night and the birds were acting rather crazy, chattering and darting here and there, catching my attention, so I looked out in the yard to watch and wonder what was coming our way.

In the middle of all this, I saw a large and colorful hummingbird fly into my yard and search over every aspect of my gazebo looking for the feeder that wasn’t there. We used to feed these long-beaked fellows every year up on the hill, but I had decided against even that in the new place.

At the sight of this granddaddy of all hummingbirds giving me a good scolding,

without question I went to my cupboard and took out the feeder stored there, prepared the sweet water and found a way of hanging the feeder on the gazebo.

Time passed and I was rewarded by the sight of the tiniest hummingbird I had ever seen, a female no bigger than half of my thumb in her dark dressings enjoying a lone feast at my feeder.

The cutest thing I had ever seen came the next day or two after the storm had passed away and the sky cleared somewhat of smoke from distant wildfires.

A lookalike bird was at my feeder but just a mite larger than the first one had been.

But, as it was feeding, my little Thumbalina returned and, while I watched, she flew over and ever so gently tapped the intruder on the shoulder who then turned to look to see who was there.

When she saw who it was, without question she flew off to relinquish the whole feeder to my half-thumb-sized guest. Wee ones affect us all that way, I guess.

And, so, in this moment, I was caught up in seeing that for the season the feeder was kept clean and filled with its nourishing substance.

I guess I’m just an easy pushover, after all, by this tiny one with the Pinocchio-sized nose.

GARDEN

Continued from Page 1B

(Prune Conserve is made by adding slices of fresh citrus fruit (orange and lemon) and small walnut pieces and optional raisins halfway through the cooking process.) When the prune butter (or conserve) is done, put it in canning jars and process it.

The process of making apple butter is very similar. Cinnamon is usually added to apple butter, (usually to excess, also more sugar than necessary. It can be much nicer to be able to taste the fruit rather than have it masked by too much sugar or spices).

When simmering a pot for long times, there is often a tendency for the contents to scorch. Many people have success with apple butter in crock pots, or making theirs in the oven. It seems like a safer way to do it if you are going to get distracted. Just be sure to cook it long enough to caramelize it and bring out as much flavor as it has to offer. Things turn out best in life if we don’t rush through them to have them over with.

I’m sure we are all getting a bit tired of gardening by now and are ready for a break, especially with the nippy weather. The chores are whatever you need to do to catch up.

- This time of year is when you think of the maintenance that needs to be done on all the

garden tools for winter storage: painting, oiling, sharpening, and sanding rough parts of handles.

- Think about getting bulbs to plant for spring and where they will be planted.
- Identify areas that will need mulch.
- Keep leaves raked away so that grass gets sunlight.
- When trees and shrubs go into freezing weather thirsty, they are more prone to winterkill.

If you have garden questions or comments please write: [greengardencolumn@yahoo.com](#) Thanks for reading!

Western Steel & Supply
5419626389

Full Line of Steel

• Stainless • Aluminum • CNC Plasma/Torch Table • Custom Sawing • CNC Press Brake • Plate Shear • Plate Rolling
ALL Your Specialty Products & Service

“Locally owned and operated Retail Business Proudly providing a service that has been missing from our community. If we don’t have it, Bob will find it!! Come meet our friendly staff and see what Western Steel and Supply can offer you.”

10218 Wallowa Lake Hwy • Island City OR

APPLIANCES
Sales, Service, Parts & Mattresses
Joy & Kristin Wilson, Owners
2036 Main St, Baker City • 541-523-6284 • ccb#219615

COASTER
Fine Furniture
CORSICANA
MATTRESS COMPANY • SINCE 1977

TAWNY'S TOY BOX
We Wrap & Ship! • 1735 Main Street, Baker City • 541-523-6526
25% OFF All Melissa & Doug for the month of October!
Classic, Unique, Educational & Fun Toys for All Ages

Your Lasting Impact Deserves Rewarding

Introducing The Preferred Rate For Teachers From Farmers Insurance. Just One Of A Million Ways We'd Like To Say "Thank You!"

ADDITIONAL OCCUPATIONAL DISCOUNTS

Farmers currently also offers discounts for:
• DOCTORS • RNS • DENTISTS
• POLICE • FIREFIGHTERS

541.963.8611
Terry Hughes
1430 Washington Ave
La Grande, OR 97850
[thughes@farmersagent.com](#)

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Know any electrical engineers?

Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative is looking for a System Engineer to be stationed at its headquarters in Baker City! OTEC offers competitive pay and benefits. Please visit our web page at [www.otecc.com/careers](#), or any local OTEC or WorkSource Oregon office for more information. A Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering is required.

La Grande's Certified Arborist
I'm putting together a Dormant Season Pruning List
MICHAEL
Certified Tree Care
Planting • Pruning • Removal
M. Curtiss PN-7077A
541-786-8463 CCB# 200613
[michaeltcurtiss@yahoo.com](#)

Steel Commercial Doors

Wayne Dalton
GARAGE DOORS™

Model 2415

Ne-Hi Enterprises
Big enough to do a large job. Small enough to care.
2122 10th St, Baker City • 541-523-6008 • ccb#155399

cents.

Support.

Local.

Round your electrical bill up to the nearest dollar to help support community needs. 100% of the funds donated are used locally.

Contact your OTEC office today or sign up online
[www.otecc.com/MemberToMember](#)

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative