



INTERNATIONAL FLAVOR. The flavor of this Chicken Noodle Peanut Butter Soup draws inspiration from two unrelated dishes — African peanut soup and spicy Thai peanut noodles. (AP Photo/Matthew Mead)

A chicken noodle soup via Africa and Thailand

By Alison Ladman
The Associated Press

As much as we love a classic chicken noodle soup, we decided to mess with ours a bit.

The essence of the dish stayed the same — chicken and noodles swimming in chicken broth. But for flavor, we went overseas, drawing inspiration from two unrelated dishes — African peanut soup

and spicy Thai peanut noodles. The combination was wonderful, assertive but still homey and comfortable.

While any cooked noodle would work in this recipe, we liked the robust flavor of soba noodles. These thin noodles made from buckwheat cook quickly and have a great texture that works well in soups. They can be found in the Asian aisle of most grocers.

Chicken Noodle Peanut Butter Soup

Start to finish: 30 minutes

Servings: 6

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size pieces
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 3/4 cup smooth peanut butter
- 1/2 cup scallions
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- Hot sauce, to taste
- Cooked soba (or other) noodles, to serve
- Toasted sesame seeds, to serve

In a large pot over medium-high, heat the olive oil. Add the onion and red pepper flakes and sauté until the onions are tender. Add the chicken and cook until browned, six to eight minutes. The chicken does not need to be fully cooked at this stage. Stir in the chicken broth and peanut butter and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the scallions, then season with salt, pepper, and hot sauce.

To serve, place noodles in a bowl then ladle the soup over them. Garnish with toasted sesame seeds.

Nutrition information per serving: 370 calories (210 calories from fat, 57 percent of total calories); 23 g fat (5 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 95 mg cholesterol; 10 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 4 g sugar; 33 g protein; 400 mg sodium.

Luck, instinct determined fates of volcano hikers

Continued from page 3

nothing signalled a fatal eruption.

One moment, the hikers were enjoying the panoramic view at 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) above sea level. Some of them were taking off their shoes and resting their feet after the morning climb. Others were cooking ramen noodles on portable stoves. The next moment, they were scrambling for shelter and running for their lives.

Ogawa, 43, was near the summit by herself, rehearsing an upcoming tour she was to escort. She was just starting the “bowl tour” around the crater when she heard an explosion, something like the noise of big fireworks, right above her head.

Some people were taking pictures of the plume rising, but she started running down. She saw big rocks shoot up high into the sky, their shape visible. Already down a bit from the summit, there was no building in sight, so she found a big rock to protect her from falling rocks. In the next moment, she smelled the powerful odor of sulfur.

“I couldn’t breathe, and rocks kept falling down like rain,” she said. “I thought I was going to die.”

What must have been a few minutes seemed like forever. Then she felt a cool breeze on her face and could breathe. She moved to a place with better protection, ducking between two big rock formations where only part of her right leg was exposed. Smoke repeatedly blacked out any sights, and falling rocks smashed against the formation where she was hiding, some of them bruising her leg and hip. In the dark, rocks as big as a minivan, or a refrigerator, flew past her. The ash had accumulated to knee height by the time she stood and ran to a lodge, to inform authorities of a woman with a leg injury she saw along the way.

Dozens of people were crammed inside the buildings as the rocks pelted, some penetrating the ceilings and walls and shattering the windows.

Ontake Summit lodge owner Tatsuo Arai, 70, knew the right escape. He was in town for shopping when the eruption occurred but remotely instructed two of his younger staff.

About 40 people took refuge at Arai’s lodge for about an hour and a half, all of



LUCK AND INSTINCT. Rescuers conduct a search operation near the peak of Mount Ontake in central Japan. Despite its impressive plume, the eruption was not a major one with lava flow. Yet, it proved deadly, because so many people were at the summit on a perfect day to enjoy hiking and the autumn leaves. (AP Photo/Kyodo News)

them staying on the first floor of the two-story building. He told them not to go near the windows because of the flying rocks.

Speaking briefly to save phone batteries, he gave crucial advice that probably saved dozens of lives: Avoid the area known as *Haccho darumi* near one of the craters, because he was worried about gasses. More than a dozen victims were found in the area. “It was my experience and gut feeling,” he said.

A sixth sense seemed to help Hidenari Hayashi, a tour guide specializing in the central Japan mountains. His group of about 40 hikers who are mostly senior citizens, started early and by midmorning they had left the summit. But walking around the crater, he noticed an unusually strong smell of sulfur that he hadn’t noticed in previous visits. Some of the hikers in his group complained about headaches from the gas. Just as a cable car carrying his group departed the station closest to the summit, an explosion sounded, which Hayashi thought was thunder at first.

“If we were two hours later, we [would have been] the first ones to have been hit,” Hayashi said. “I’m grateful I’m still alive.”

Ogawa was shocked when she returned to her home in the Nagano prefecture and saw footage of the eruption on television.

“It was intense, it was almost surreal,” she said. “I have to remind myself that anything can happen at the mountains.”

Asian talent growing in the NWSL

Continued from page 8

Samantha Kerr, who has Indian ancestry, returned to the NWSL’s Western New York Flash after a successful rookie campaign. Last season, she scored six goals and assisted on five more for the Flash, who finished the regular season in first place. Though the Flash finished in seventh place this year, it was not for a lack of effort by Kerr. The forward started in 20 games, leading the club with nine goals and also adding four assists.

The Portland Thorns boast another Asian player, Hawai’i native Meleana “Mana” Shim, who made the team last season after an open tryout and then was named the team’s Newcomer of the Year, scoring five goals and giving two assists in her 19 games.

This season, Shim was featured as a sparkplug off the bench, and she sat out two games with a knee injury, leading to lower numbers. She started four games, appeared in 13 more, and assisted on two goals. Shim and the Thorns will look to 2015 for the team’s second NWSL champion-



DYNAMIC DUO. Defenders Abby Erceg (left) and Rachel Quon (right) of the Chicago Red Stars defend Portland Thorns FC forward Jessica McDonald (center) at a match held at Providence Park. The dynamic duo helped Chicago allow just 26 goals during the 2014 season, second-best in the National Women’s Soccer League. (AR Photo/Jan Landis)

ship.

Whether through the growing talent pipeline from INAC Kobe Leonessa, loan agreements with other teams, or open tryouts like the one that brought Shim to the Thorns,

the NWSL is following the lead of many other pro leagues, looking eastward to give themselves the best chance at victory.

To learn more about the NWSL, visit <www.nwslsoccer.com>.

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