

Anson Mills

1922-C Gervais Street - Columbia, South Carolina 29201 • tel. (803) 467-4122 • sales@AnsonMills.com

Chicken Bog

Time: First day, cook the chicken and reduce the stock (active time 25 minutes, plus an hour to cook the chicken, 30 minutes to cool, and 45 minutes to reduce the stock). Second day, cook the rice in the bog (active time 5 minutes, plus 25 minutes to finish cooking).

At its most elemental, chicken bog is a rich porridge of shredded, stewed chicken and tender rice, swollen with broth and silky with butter. The perfect bog is spoon food, a Carolinian take on congee. One last spoonful of broth should remain in the bottom of the bowl after the other ingredients are gone.

Equipment Mise en Place

For this recipe, you will need a heavy, nonreactive 5- or 6-quart stockpot, a pair of tongs, a rimmed sheet pan, a fine, footed colander or conical strainer, a large mixing bowl, and a wooden spoon.

Working Ahead

Cook the chicken, pick the meat from the bones, and reduce and strain the stock on the first day; the finishing work on the second day is a cinch. It is also easier to remove fat from the stock when it is cold and the fat has congealed.

Don't cut the scallions in advance. They will lose their fresh flavor and wind up tasting like soap.

Ingredients

1 organic chicken, 3 to 3 ½ pounds, washed, liver and gizzard reserved for another use, and neck bone, if present, along for the ride

2 medium yellow onions, diced small

2 small or 1 large carrot, peeled and chopped into ½-inch lengths

1 celery rib, chopped into ½-inch lengths

3 garlic cloves, peeled

6 sprigs fresh or 1 ½ teaspoons dried thyme

1 Turkish bay leaf

Handful of fresh parsley stems

4 cups homemade chicken broth or 2 quarts low-sodium boxed broth

Cooking Remarks

The area around Myrtle Beach lays claim to the most popular black-iron-kettle pilau—chicken bog, a stew of chicken, rice, onions, and sausage sparked with black pepper and bay. The use of the word “bog” to describe this dish has acquired a couple of interpretations. The first is descriptive: sogginess, or “bogginess,” suggests the swamp bogs of the lowcountry. The second is elemental: pieces of chicken are “bogged” down in rice.

The art of creating a first-class chicken bog lies in getting the proportions right and knowing when to add the rice to achieve just the right texture—not too dry, not too wet—a succulent richness in which the rice remains “grain for grain.” Today chicken bog continues its role as community culinary player for events like the political stump at Gallivants Ferry, South Carolina. But its lineage speaks to the Creole confluence of communal rice dishes from Africa, Persia, Indonesia, and Asia.

Originally, this dish would have been made with a stewing chicken, but unless you own a laying hen on the verge of retirement, you're looking at a maximum 3- to 3 ½ pound

4 cups spring or filtered water (if using homemade broth)
1 dry-cured, smoked sausage, 10 ounces, 1/2 inch in diameter, cut into 1/2-inch rounds
1 cup (7 ounces) Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice
Fine sea salt
1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 scallions, cleaned and chopped
3 tablespoons fresh chopped parsley leaves

Directions

- First day:* Combine the chicken neck (if using), onions, carrots, celery, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, parsley stems, chicken broth, and water (if using) in a heavy, nonreactive 5- or 6-quart stockpot. Place the chicken breast side up in the pot and bring the liquid to a simmer over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and simmer gently until the chicken legs pull easily from the carcass, about an hour. Remove from the heat and cool at room temperature for 30 minutes.
- Using tongs, transfer the chicken from the pot to a rimmed sheet pan. Let sit until cool enough to handle, then remove the meat from the bones and pull it into small pieces. Cover and refrigerate. (Note: 1 pound or 4 cups of chicken meat is all you need for the bog. If you have extra meat, save it for a sandwich.) Discard any chicken skin. Return the bones to the stockpot, bring the broth to a simmer over medium heat, and simmer until it is rich, flavorful, and reduced to a generous 6 cups, about 45 minutes. Strain the broth through a fine, footed colander or conical strainer into a large mixing bowl. Refrigerate overnight.
- Second day:* Lift the congealed fat from the top of the stock with a spoon and discard. Return the stockpot to the stove, stir in the reserved chicken meat and the sausage, and bring the stock to a simmer, covered, over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to low and stir in the rice, salt, and pepper. Continue to simmer very gently, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender and has thickened the broth, about 25 minutes. The stew should be thick but not dry, and the grains of rice should be full but not exploded.
- Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the butter. Mince the scallions. Ladle the chicken and rice into 6 shallow bowls. Sprinkle with scallions and parsley. Serve immediately. Pickled jalapenos are a perfect condiment to serve with this dish.

grocery-store bird. Gentle stewing is recommended, no matter what the bird's age. Cook the chicken breast side up to avoid overcooking the white meat; if the breastbone stands up out of the broth, all the better. If you have time, cool the chicken in the broth before hauling it onto a sheet pan to pull the meat off the bones—the cooked meat will reabsorb some of the broth as it cools and remain tender (and you won't want to scream from the pain of pulling apart a hot bird).

Chicken bog is dead easy, but the ingredient proportions are critical. In the end, you'll be pleased if you've kept track of amounts of pulled chicken meat, volume of broth, and weights of sausage and rice. Speaking of sausage, its quality has a big impact on the overall quality of this dish. Low-rent supermarket sausage powered with liquid smoke will overwhelm the other flavors. If you can't locate real dry-cured smoked sausage, leave it out altogether. The bog will be grateful.