by David Latt

Usually on Thanksgiving between 20-25 people come over for dinner. This year we had a smaller group. With 10, we had time to talk and there wasn't quite as much work getting the meal ready. Out of habit, though, we bought the same size turkey we always buy, a 25 pounder. So we assumed we'd have a lot of food left over, enough for several days of sandwiches.

When we looked in the refrigerator on Friday, we were surprised that we had very little cranberry sauce, almost no stuffing, and only enough white meat for a couple of sandwiches. But, happily, we did have a lot of dark meat and almost a gallon of turkey stock we'd made Thanksgiving night.

For our day after Thanksgiving dinner, I didn't want to spend a lot of time in the kitchen and I wanted a good comfort meal. Dumplings with anything is always great, but with richly flavored turkey stew, there's nothing more satisfying.

Turkey Stew with Dumplings and Vegetables

Yield: 4-6 servings
Time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

4 cups cooked, shredded turkey dark meat
6 cups turkey stock (fat removed)
2 carrots (washed, peeled, ends removed, chopped into thick rounds)
2 sweet potatoes (cooked, skins removed, roughly chopped)
1 medium yellow onion (peeled, ends removed, roughly chopped)
1 ear of corn (kernels removed) or 1 cup of canned or frozen corn
1 celery stalk (washed, ends removed, roughly chopped)
1/2 cup brown or shiitake mushrooms (washed, thinly sliced)
4 garlic cloves (peeled, finely chopped)
1/2 cup Italian parsley (leaves only, finely chopped)
1 small bunch spinach (washed thoroughly, stems removed)
1 cup flour
1 tablespoon sweet butter
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 - 3/4 cup half and half
Olive oil
Sea salt and pepper

Method:

In a dutch oven or a frying pan with tall sides, sauté the carrots, garlic, celery, mushrooms, onions, corn, and parsley in olive oil until lightly browned. Season with sea salt and pepper. Add the shredded turkey, cooked sweet potatoes, and turkey stock. Simmer. Drop in the spinach and cook for 10 minutes or until the spinach has wilted. Taste and adjust the seasonings.

To make the dumplings, mix together the flour, baking soda, sugar, season with sea salt and pepper in a bowl. Finely chop the butter, add to the flour and mix well. Slowly pour in the half and half, stirring until the batter has a thick consistency. Using 2 spoons, make dumplings and ease them them into the hot liquid.

Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Serve with a salad and a baguette.

Variations

Add 2 tablespoons finely chopped scallions or Italian parsley to the dumplings.

Add 2 tablespoons finely chopped roasted red peppers to the dumplings.

David Latt is an Emmy-award winning television producer who turns to cooking to alleviate stress. He shares his experiences with food and his favorite recipes on his blog Men Who Like To Cook .