

FROM ANDREA'S KITCHEN ITALIAN WEDDING SOUP

by Andrea Woodson

This month's recipe is Italian Wedding Soup. This soup is the Italian equivalent of chicken noodle soup. My grandfather came over to America from Italy in 1906, so authentic Italian food was something we enjoyed growing up. I guess for that reason, it will always be my true comfort food. Wedding soup has nothing to do with weddings. It gets its name from the Italian phrase *minestra maritata* meaning "married soup" and refers to the marriage of the flavors of the vegetables and meat, its main ingredients. I hope you enjoy this ultimate comfort dish!

INGREDIENTS

Meatballs

- 1 small onion
- 1/3 cup Italian parsley
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
- 8 oz. ground beef
- 8 oz. ground pork or ground lamb
- 1/2 cup breadcrumbs
- 2 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1/4 teaspoon of pepper

Soup

- 12 cups of low sodium chicken broth
- 1 pound of Escarole or baby spinach can be substituted
- 1 cup of dry Acini de Pepe or orzo pasta
- 3/4 cup of celery
- 1 cup of onion, diced



PREPARATION

Combine all ingredients for the meatballs together and roll small meatballs about the size of an inch or smaller and place on a parchment lined sheet pan.

Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil to a Dutch oven or stockpot and sauté the onion and celery until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the chicken broth and bring to a boil. While boiling add in your escarole or spinach, uncooked meatballs and pasta. Simmer on medium heat for 20-25 minutes or until meatballs are done and pasta is al dente.

Top with fresh Parmesan cheese and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with toasted crusty bread and *buon appetito!*