

Mangia Bene, Viva Bene

By FRANK ZEOLI

In addition to being a great cook, my grandmother was perhaps the most kind and generous woman I knew. Her passion for food was matched only by her concern for people. She would use her food to show people exactly how much they meant to her. When I say people, I not only mean her family but friends and complete strangers too.

A perfect example was when repairmen would come to the house to service or repair something. They would leave with a jar of sauce, hot soup, or fresh baked cookies. I remember on one occasion, the man who regularly serviced her furnace had to reschedule her appointment because he did not want anyone else to touch her furnace. He later admitted he did not want anyone to get his jar of sauce.

When my grandmother heard someone was sick, she would immediately get up and make them hot soup. This happened on a regular basis. I know because she would call me and say, "I need you to take some soup to Antoinette. She is not feeling well".

Writing this reminds me of the many examples of my grandmother's compassion and generosity. Her soup was a lot like her, full of great ingredients and warm to the heart and soul.

Chicken Soup



This recipe makes a lot of soup because she would share it with so many. You can cut it in half, if you need to.

Prep Time: 30 Minutes

Cook Time: 3 Hours

Ingredients

- 16 oz of celery (chopped)
- 16 oz of carrots (sliced)
- 2 lbs. of spinach (chopped, frozen)
- 2 lbs. of orzo pasta
- 2 lbs. of chicken (chopped or pulled) She would make a couple of roasted chickens and would pull the meat off.
- 8 QT of chicken stock (you can use canned stock or make your own.)
- 3T granulated onion
- Salt & Pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a large stock pot, bring 8 qt of chicken stock to a boil.
2. Add the carrots, celery, and spinach. Reduce the heat and simmer until the vegetables are cooked. About 25 minutes.
3. Add the shredded chicken.
4. In a medium pot, bring salted water to a boil and add the orzo. During the cooking process some of the water will evaporate. When the orzo is al dente, drain the remaining water and cool the pasta by adding cold water. Do not over-cook the pasta. Cooling the pasta stops the cooking process so it does not get mushy once in the soup.

5. Drain the pasta and add it to the soup.

6. Add salt, pepper, and granulated onion.

7. Simmer for 2 more hours on low heat and serve it hot.

Enjoy a large bowl with plenty of grated parmesan cheese on top.

Look for more recipes in the next edition of the **SIAMO QUI.**

