



This week Remedies

Felicity Cloake tries your suggestions for zapping midwinter maladies

Cooking might be the last thing on your mind when you're feeling under the weather, but for some of us, nothing is more medicinal than a quiet afternoon in front of the stove.

Helen Best-Shaw's quick and easy dal won my heart - both spicy enough to cut through a cold, and healthy enough to feel medicinal. And as for the other recipes below, from buttery crumpets to good old chicken soup, if you can't find something to cheer you up, then things really must be serious ...

THE WINNING RECIPE DAL WITH KALE

For when you've overindulged ...
Helen Best-Shaw, fussfreelavours.com

Serves 2

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil**
- 1 small onion, finely chopped**
- 1 tsp curry powder**
- 1 tsp cumin seeds**



For your chance to be crowned Guardian home cook of the year, send us your ORANGE recipes.

Recipes will appear on 2 February.

Email your recipe suggestions to recipes@guardian.co.uk by noon on Wednesday 23 January. Please include your name, address and phone number (conditions apply: see guardian.co.uk/recipe-swap/terms-and-conditions)

- 1 tsp nigella seeds**
- 100g red lentils**
- 250ml vegetable stock***
- Juice of a lemon**
- 1 large handful of kale, shredded**
- Salt and black pepper**

1 Fry the onion in the vegetable oil for a couple of minutes until softened, then add the spices and the lentils. Fry for a few minutes until the spices are fragrant.

2 Add the stock, simmer over a low heat, stirring from time to time for about half an hour until the lentils are soft, but still holding their shape. Add more stock if needed - you want them to be quite soupy.

3 Add the lemon juice, stir in the kale and cook for a few more minutes until it is wilted. Season to taste.

*For a more soupy dal, you will require about 500ml

FAUX 'PHO' CHICKEN SOUP

I first made this when house-bound with a cold, desperate for the healing complexity of a pho broth but unable to tolerate the idea of roasting bones the traditional way. This process only takes two hours or so (perfect if you want to assemble the broth, take a rest, then enjoy the soup) and can easily be completed by your partner or flatmate if you find yourself too weak to pull the chicken meat off the carcass.

Brie O'Keefe, handtomouthkitchen.com

Serves 4

- For the broth
- 7cm piece of ginger, thickly sliced**
- 3 lemongrass stalks, halved, tops discarded**
- 1 whole chicken**
- 5-7 star anise**
- 1 bunch coriander stems (leaves reserved)**



- 1 onion, sliced**
- Fish sauce, to taste**

- For each soup bowl
- Rice stick noodles**

- For the garnish
- Herbs of your choice (chives, coriander, parsley, Thai basil or mint)**
- 1-2 birdseye chillies, finely chopped**
- Beansprouts**
- Limes, quartered**
- Salad onions, thinly chopped**

1 First char the ginger and lemongrass with a blow torch or over a gas burner.

2 Put all the broth ingredients except the fish sauce into a stockpot and bring to a boil. Gently simmer for 1½-2 hours (the carcass should almost fall apart when you lift it out of the pot). Take a nap here if needed.

3 Remove the chicken, and strain the stock into a bowl. Give the pot a rinse and strain the stock again when returning to the pot. Add fish sauce to taste and simmer for another 10-15 minutes. Pick the meat from the chicken bones.

GRAHAM TURNER

Red lentils and spices fried with onion: dal and kale

4 Put your rice noodles in a pot of boiling water, turn off the heat immediately and let sit for about 5-10 minutes (the noodles should be very al dente) before straining and adding to individual bowls. The stock will finish cooking them as it cools.

5 Divide the chicken between the bowls, then spoon the hot broth on top.

6 I serve my faux pho with a large central plate of garnish options in the centre of the table so people can get stuck in according to taste.

JEWISH CHICKEN SOUP

You must start this the day before you need the soup.

Judith Flanders, London WC1

Serves 4-6

- 1 chicken**
- 1 chicken carcass (or 6-10 chicken wings)**
- 1-2 giblets (or as many as you can get)**
- 1 swede, cut into quarters**
- 1 large onion, peeled**
- 2 carrots, scrubbed**
- 2 celery stalks**
- 1 large bunch of parsley**
- 1 large bunch of dill**

1 Wash the chicken, carcass and giblets and put in a stockpot, then add enough cold water to cover both the chicken and the vegetables (which you will add later). Put the lid on and bring to a gentle simmer.

2 Skim any froth as it comes to the surface. When no more froth appears, add the rest of the ingredients, and cover with the lid slightly askew.

3 Allow to simmer very gently (only the odd bubble should rise to the surface) for 3 hours or more. Do not let the soup boil: if it does it will become cloudy. After 3-4 hours, the chicken should disintegrate when you lift it up with a spoon. Take it off the heat, and separate out the stock from the solids. (I throw out the herbs, then purée the rest of the vegetables, and the next day use some of the stock to thin it, making a vegetable soup known in my family as "garbage soup".)

4 Strain the liquid to remove any random bits of meat etc, salt to taste, then put the soup in the fridge overnight (this is very important.) In the morning, a layer of fat will have formed on the surface, which can be removed with a spoon or skimmer. (If you have really done well, the soup itself will be almost jelly: the sign of what the Jewish call "good strong soup".)

5 Remove the fat, then ladle the soup into another container: there will be a layer of sediment at the bottom of the bowl that needs to be thrown away, so be careful.

6 The soup can then be used, or frozen - and there you go, you are now a certified member of the Jewish Housewives League!

LEEK PUDDING

I hail from Tyneside, where leeks are a prized ingredient (in more ways than one). Below is a recipe for leek pudding that I picked up from my mother - it's real peasant food and quantities are pretty flexible. I hope you enjoy it, but you must remember to keep it as simple as possible: don't be tempted to add anything to the filling (stock, bacon etc): the pureness of this dish is what makes it so fantastic. Oh, and the guilty secret is to try it with HP sauce.
Michael Casey, Argyll

Serves 4

- 3 leeks**
- 125g butter or margarine**
- 250g plain flour**
- Salt and black pepper**

1 Wash and chop the leeks into 2cm rings, including all but the woodiest green bits (chop the green bits a bit thinner), and drain but do not dry.

2 Use your fingers to rub the butter and

a tiny bit of salt through the flour to make a suet. Add a small quantity of cold water and knead to a stiff dough.

3 Grease a 1-litre pudding basin with butter. Roll out the dough and use to line the basin with a slight overhang, leaving enough dough to make a circle to top the basin.

4 Put the drained but wet leeks into the lined basin (do not add any more liquid!), packing them as tight as you can without piercing the pastry. Grind in lots of black pepper (but no salt). Top with the circle of dough and squish the edges together to seal.

5 Make a small airhole in the top and cover tightly with foil or a tea towel, then steam in a pan of boiling water on a low heat, or in a low oven for 2-3 hours. When the pastry looks somewhere between wet, dry and crusty and the thing smells fantastic, it's ready.

CRUMPETS

Carbs to me mean comfort, particularly when packed with as much melting butter as possible.

Helen Graves, helengraves.co.uk

Makes about 14

- 2 tsp active dry yeast**
- 1 tsp sugar**
- 580ml warm milk**
- 360g plain flour**
- 1½ tsp salt**
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda**
- Vegetable or groundnut oil, to cook**

1 Combine the yeast and sugar with 250ml of the warm milk in a bowl. Cover and leave in a warm place to rest for about 10 minutes until frothy.

2 Sift the flour, salt and bicarbonate of soda into another bowl, then make a well in the centre and add the yeasty mix along with the rest of the warm milk. Mix this to a thick batter using a wooden spoon. Cover it with clingfilm and rest in a warm place for about an hour. The film will rise up as gases build up inside. This is good - you will have an extremely light and aerated batter.

3 Heat a wide pan over a medium heat then turn down fairly low. Use a piece of kitchen paper to wipe vegetable or groundnut oil over the base so it is coated in a nice film. Do the same to your crumpet rings (if using), or you can simply drop blobs of batter straight into the pan. Allow to cook for about 8 minutes or so, or until they appear "dry" on top, then flip them over to toast lightly for a minute on the other side. Remove to a wire rack to cool. Repeat as necessary.

4 The crumpets can be reheated under a grill to crisp up more before serving. Spread liberally with butter and then rejoice in their holey juiciness.