

AT A GLANCE:

Makes 8-10 servings

Prep: 15 minutes

LOW: 3-4 hours

Orzo: 20-30 min

6-qt or larger

slow cooker

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbsp avocado oil
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 4 celery stalks, chopped
- 4 carrots, chopped
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil
- Zest of 1 large lemon
- 8 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 1/2 cups dry orzo
- 4 cups cooked shredded turkey
- 1 tsp salt; 1 tsp pepper
- 3 cups fresh spinach
- 1 cup half-and-half
- 3 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley



DIRECTIONS:

1. Sauté the vegetables.

Heat oil in a skillet. Cook onion, celery, carrots, and mushrooms 5 minutes. Add garlic, thyme, oregano, basil, and lemon zest; cook 30 seconds.

2. Start the slow cooker.

Transfer vegetables to a 6-quart or larger slow cooker. Add broth, salt, and pepper. Cover and cook on LOW 3-4 hours, until carrots are tender.

3. Add turkey and orzo.

Stir in cooked turkey and dry orzo. Cover and cook on HIGH 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the orzo is tender.

4. Finish creamy.

Turn to LOW. Stir in spinach and half-and-half; warm gently until spinach wilts. Do not boil.

5. Add fresh lemon.

Turn off heat. Stir in 2 Tbsp lemon juice and parsley. Taste; add the final tablespoon of lemon juice if desired.

6. Serve.

Ladle into bowls. Garnish with additional lemon zest or parsley if desired.

CREAM SUBSTITUTIONS (replace 1 cup half-and-half):

1. Nonfat dry milk + cream cheese: 1 cup water, 1/3 cup dry milk powder, 2 oz cream cheese.
2. Evaporated milk: 1 cup undiluted evaporated milk.
3. Evaporated milk + cream cheese: 3/4 cup evaporated milk, 1 oz cream cheese.

Kitchen note: Orzo thickens as it rests. Add broth when reheating to restore consistency.

The Comfort That Remains

A Familiar Bowl of Soup, a Lifetime of Love

SCRIPTURE • ISAIAH 46:4 (NIV)

“I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.”

When our children were growing up, my husband and I both worked demanding sales jobs. Life was busy, schedules were full, and there never seemed to be enough hours in the day.

But we had a little family tradition: “Go Greek—once a week!”

There was a wonderful, authentic Greek restaurant called Nomiki’s where we loved to have lunch. One of our favorite dishes was their avgolemono soup, a delicious Greek lemon chicken and rice soup.

Somehow, that soup became more than a favorite meal.

Whenever one of our children was home sick from school, or I had to pick them up during the day because they weren’t feeling well, a bowl of Nomiki’s lemon soup was often part of the remedy.

It wasn’t homemade. I never did manage to get Nomiki’s recipe. But it was warm, nourishing, familiar, and delivered with a mother’s love.

Years passed. The children grew up, established their own homes, and developed their own ways of doing things. The little Greek restaurant became part of our family memories.

Then, recently, my daughter sent me a turkey-orzo soup recipe she wanted to try. She thought adding lemon would make it even better. We worked through some adjustments, and before long, we had a creamy lemon-herb turkey soup that brought those familiar flavors back to our table.

And with them came the memories.

As our children grow older, life changes. There was a time when I could pick them up from school, tuck them into bed, and bring them a comforting bowl of soup. Today, distance and responsibilities sometimes make those simple acts of mothering impossible. Yet the love remains, even when the ways we express it must change.

The Comfort That Remains • Continued

What a comfort to know that God's care is never limited by distance or circumstance! In Isaiah 46:4, He promises to carry and sustain us throughout our lives. Our hands may no longer reach our children as they once did, but His always can. And sometimes, a familiar bowl of lemon soup reminds us that the love planted in childhood continues to nourish hearts long after those childhood years have passed.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for the precious memories woven into ordinary family moments and for Your unfailing care throughout every season of life.

Please help me trust You with those I love when I cannot be there myself, and I will faithfully lift them to You in prayer. Please remind me that Your love reaches where my hands cannot, and I will rest in Your promises.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

A MOMENT TO REFLECT

1. What simple family traditions have become treasured memories of love and comfort?

2. How can you offer comfort to someone you love, even when you cannot be physically present?

3. Who do you need to entrust more fully to God's faithful care today?
