

Coconut Salmon Chowder

Coconut milk is my absolute favorite creative modification to replace full-fat dairy without losing the full flavor of a smooth and creamy taste! The beauty of coconut milk is that it takes on the flavor of the ingredients added to it so that, if desired, its coconut flavor is easily masked simply by adding spices like curry or berries for sweetness.

Even for those who can digest dairy, it is still in the best interest for anyone desiring optimal heart health to either consume 1% or skim milk, which are lowest in animal sources of saturated fats, or to utilize the resources of more healthful creative modifications such as the plant-based saturated fats found in coconut milk. While coconut milk (and other coconut products) still contain high levels of saturated fat, the fat content is composed of mainly medium chain triglycerides, which do not contribute to heart disease and still provide that luxuriously-rich tasting pleasure.

The story behind my Coconut Salmon Chowder recipe is that last Fall I was looking for inventive way to make my own nutritious version of chowder utilizing one of the Great Northwest's greatest gifts—wild salmon. Combine this delightful resource with nutrient-rich ingredients like yams, kale, and fresh garlic and you can save yourself a road trip to the beach by creating a mouthwatering chowder within the comforts of your very own home.

- 8 c. broth
- 2 14-oz. cans coconut milk
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 Tbsp. garlic, minced
- 3 yams, organic, cubed
- 1 stalk celery, organic chopped
- 4 c. Great Northern beans (uncooked)
- 12-oz. wild salmon filet, skinned, de-boned (or 2 cans wild salmon)
- 1/2 bunch curly kale, organic, chopped

Optional Ingredients: Salmon may be omitted from this recipe if desired and swapped out with a double portion of beans. Lite coconut milk may be used instead of regular coconut milk to lighten the calories. Other delicious veggies for this chowder include: red bell pepper, purple potatoes, green onion, and squash. Fresh or dried herbs and spices such as parsley, dill, paprika, cumin, or Dijon mustard complement this soup nicely.

In a slow cooker, add all ingredients except the kale—the broth, coconut milk, onion, garlic, yams, celery, beans, and salmon. If using a salmon filet rather than canned, simply add the whole filet upon adding the other ingredients at the start of recipe. Then later on just before serving, it will flake apart easily using a fork in the soup broth. Slow cook on medium heat for about 6 hours or until veggies are al dente. About 5 minutes before serving, remove chowder from heat and add kale to soup, letting it tenderize by wilting in the hot broth.

Yield: 6-8 servings

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Shopping List:

- 2 32-oz. containers broth, organic (8 cups chicken or veggie)
- 2 14-oz. cans coconut milk
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 Tbsp. garlic, minced
- 3 yams organic, cubed
- 1 stalk celery, organic, chopped
- 4 c. Great Northern beans (uncooked)
- 2 cans -or- 12-oz. wild salmon filet, skinned, de-boned
- 1/2 bunch curly kale, organic, chopped

Tips: When adding greens to any soup, add them no sooner than 5-10 minutes before serving. Gently wilting the greens until they are tender provides the best flavor while also retaining maximum nutrients. This is especially vital when using kale because kale infuses a sulfur-like flavor which will affect a recipe's entire flavor when it is overcooked. The best way to avoid this scenario is to consume the soup with kale in its entirety the same day that it is cooked or by adding greens only to the portion of soup which will be eaten that same day.

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