

# Lemon Garlic-y Chicken Orzo Soup

**A Vibrant, Comforting Soup with  
Lemon, Garlic, Chicken and Orzo**

**Lemon? Yes! Garlic? Absolutely! Orzo? YES, PLEASE!**

The combination of these three ingredients results in a vibrant, delicious soup that's easy to prepare and sure to please. To make things even easier, there is a simple trick for cutting both cooking and prep time in half—making this recipe a perfect choice for busy days.

Seasonal Citrus Inspiration

This time of year, friends, neighbors, and customers often share amazing citrus, which inspires fresh recipes. With a love for soup and an even greater passion for fresh lemons, creating a lemon-based soup becomes an obvious choice. Lemon Garlic Chicken Orzo Soup is a flavorful and comforting dish that brings together the bright taste of lemon, the boldness of garlic, and the satisfying texture of orzo pasta. Each ingredient plays a distinct role: lemon brings freshness, garlic adds depth, and orzo and chicken provide heartiness. This soup is simple to make in a crock pot, heavy pot, or Dutch oven.

Choosing the Perfect Orzo

At PINETOP OLIVE OIL, a variety of PAPPARDELLE'S Orzo flavors are available, including Autumn Harvest, Spring Medley, Lemon Garlic, Rainbow, and Southwest. For this recipe, Lemon Garlic Orzo is selected to complement the soup's flavors. This orzo is offered year-round because of its popularity among customers.

For those who prefer gluten-free options, gluten-free orzo and pasta are also available and work beautifully in this recipe.

If using gluten-free pasta or orzo, it's best to cook it separately and add it directly to each bowl of soup just before serving. This approach prevents the gluten-free pasta from overcooking and becoming mushy, ensuring the best texture and flavor in every serving.

Effortless Preparation

To keep the recipe simple, I used a rotisserie chicken from the grocery store, saving time without sacrificing flavor. You can save the chicken carcass to make a flavorful chicken stock. After deboning the chicken, the bones (skin and all) can be placed in a plastic bag and stored in the freezer for future use in stews, sauces, soups, or any dish that calls for chicken or beef stock.

Using homemade stock captures the essence of roasted chicken and utilizes every part of the bird, promoting sustainability in the kitchen.

Making chicken stock from scratch can contribute to better health, as it is free from artificial preservatives and additives. It also allows control over sodium levels and customization of flavor profiles according to personal preferences.

Garlic and Immunity: Why This Soup Is a Go-To for Cold and Flu

Many people consider Lemon Garlic Chicken Orzo Soup a comforting remedy during cold and flu season. The generous use of garlic in the recipe adds compounds known to boost immune function, supporting the body's defenses and promoting faster recovery when feeling under the weather.

Beyond its health benefits, garlic is a beloved ingredient for its bold flavor and versatility, bringing a distinct, savory taste to dishes—especially in a soothing soup like this one.

Cooking with Garlic: Embracing Bold Flavors

Using 10 cloves of garlic may sound intense, but the garlic's flavor softens as the soup simmers. The long cooking time allows the garlic to mellow and blend seamlessly with the

other ingredients, creating a rich, aromatic base that enhances the overall flavor of the dish without overpowering it.

Let's make it!

## Lemon Garlic Chicken Orzo Soup: Ingredients and Step-by-Step Directions

### Ingredients

- 8 ounces PAPPAREDELLE'S Lemon Garlic Orzo
- PINETOP OLIVE OIL (choose from Meyer Lemon, Roasted Garlic, Shallot Garlic, or Greek Konecki; Meyer Lemon recommended)
- 3 medium carrots, chopped
- 3 ribs celery, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 10 (or more) cloves of garlic, minced
- Use ½ teaspoon dried thyme, or fresh thyme if preferred.
- Use ½ teaspoon of dried oregano, or substitute with fresh oregano.
- Sea salt and ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 (32-ounce) cartons fat-free, low-sodium chicken broth
- ½ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 whole rotisserie chicken, chopped or shredded
- 2 cups baby spinach leaves
- 1 lemon, sliced for garnish (optional)
- ¼ cup freshly grated Parmesan Reggiano cheese (optional)

### Directions

1. Over medium heat, add a generous drizzle of PINETOP OLIVE OIL to a large pan. Add carrots, onion, and celery, stirring until the vegetables soften and the onions turn translucent, about 5 minutes.
2. Add the minced garlic and cook for about one minute until fragrant.
3. Season the mixture with thyme, oregano, bay leaf, sea salt, and ground black pepper.

*Combine everything well by stirring.*

4. Pour in the chicken broth and bring the mixture to a boil.
5. Lower the heat and add the orzo, lemon juice, lemon zest, and shredded chicken.
6. Cover the pot and continue cooking until the orzo becomes tender.
7. Add baby spinach and cook just until the spinach wilts into the soup.

### Serving Suggestions

To complement this dish, serve it with a slice of PINETOP OLIVE OIL Classic Focaccia. For a perfect pairing, select one of our wonderful wine options. A top recommendation is the David Bynum Russian River Chardonnay from Sonoma County. This wine features an enticing aroma of lemon curd, apple pie, and graham crackers, along with balanced oak aging and layers of toasted hazelnuts. It pairs exceptionally well with soups, butternut squash, salty cheeses, and grilled pork chops.

Cheers!

Kimberly Young