

**Seasonal Eating**  
**Whitney Danhof, Extension Agent**

**Fall Starts Soup Season**  
**September 2025**

When the weather turns cooler and football season is in full swing, soups hit the dinner table. Simple, casual, warming soups that stick to the ribs and serve a crowd. While chili is the usual suspect for ballgame gatherings, try a new option this season with Mulligatawny soup. Not only is it fun to say but it is a bowl packed with flavor and one of the best soups I've had in a long time.

This is kicked up chicken and rice soup with a broth flavored with a little curry powder, thyme and black pepper and then made creamy with coconut milk. Flavorful but not spicy, this is a bowl full of comfort food.

Mulligatawny is a British/Indian fusion dish developed during the British rule of India in the late 19th century. There are many variations of Mulligatawny but generally include a curry flavored broth filled with a protein (usually chicken) and vegetables (carrots, celery, onion) along with chopped or grated apple, thickened up with rice or lentils and made creamy with the last-minute addition of coconut milk or cream.



I'm not a huge curry fan. I'll make curried chicken salad once in a while but, as with this soup, it is a light touch and adds flavor without being overwhelming. This soup has a beautiful flavor that I loved from the first bite. Curry powder is actually a spice mixture. Each brand uses a slightly different combination but generally American curry uses a base of turmeric, coriander, cumin, fenugreek, cinnamon, black pepper, ginger and cardamom. Most curry powders are mild but they also make hot curry blends that contain more red pepper, chili powder, mustard and other hot spices. I used a basic mild curry powder for my soup but you can kick it up into the spicy realm depending on the curry powder you use. The curry powder will toast along with the flour for a few minutes in the butter and vegetable mixture to bring out its flavor before adding the broth.

You may use boneless, skinless chicken breast as I did or if you prefer darker meat, chicken thighs work well too. My chicken breast was very tender. Be sure to cut it into small cubes, not big chunks. Some people even puree the soup when done, but I prefer the small chunks of the chicken and finely diced carrot, celery, onion and apple for a little texture.

The coconut milk added at the end makes the soup velvety. It does not have a strong coconut flavor but just adds creaminess and mellows out the curry flavor. You can find coconut milk in cans in the Asian section of the grocery store. Just be sure to get coconut milk and not the cream of coconut. Shake the can well before opening. If you don't have any coconut milk, you can always just add cream at the end.

So, try something new in Mulligatawny Soup at your fall gatherings and family dinners and give your chicken and rice soup a flavor upgrade.

For more information and recipes check out the Seasonal Eating page at [bedford.tennessee.edu](http://bedford.tennessee.edu).

## **Mulligatawny Soup**

1/2 onion, finely chopped  
1 carrot, finely chopped  
2 ribs celery, finely chopped  
4 tablespoons butter  
1 clove garlic, pressed  
1 1/2 tablespoons flour  
2 teaspoons curry powder  
1/4 teaspoon black pepper  
1/4 teaspoon dried thyme  
4 cups chicken broth  
1 granny smith apple, cored and finely chopped  
1 boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into 3/8" cubes  
1/2 cup white rice  
1/2 (14-ounce) can coconut milk

In a large Dutch oven, sauté the onion, carrot and celery in the butter until tender, about 5 minutes. Add garlic and sauté for a minute. Add flour, curry powder, pepper and thyme. Stir and cook for another 5 minutes. Add chicken broth, apple and chicken. Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Cook, covered, for 30 minutes. Add rice and continue simmering, covered, for another 20-30 minutes, until rice is tender. Add the coconut milk. Stir until warmed and incorporated. Ladle into shallow bowls and serve hot.