The swap: Heavy cream → Roasted veggies + light coconut milk

Moroccan-Spiced Chicken & Roasted Sweet Potato Soup

By Angie Hayman

Tender Moroccan-spiced chicken, fluffy jasmine rice, and sautéed bok choy come together in a rich, velvety soup made with roasted sweet potatoes, vegetables, light coconut milk, and warm aromatic spices. A touch of harissa adds gentle heat, creating a comforting, flavor-packed meal without heavy cream.



PREP	COOK	TOTAL	SERVINGS	DIFFICULTY	CALORIES
30 min	60-75	~1 hr 45 min	10	Easy–Moderate	~468 est. per serving

This version saves ~282 calories per serving vs the classic (38% lighter)

Soup · Moroccan-inspired · High-protein · Dairy-free · Calorie-conscious

Approximate Nutrition

Estimated

Per serving (about 1 1/2 cups)

~468	~33g	~52g	~14g	~6.4g	~8g	~656mg
CALORIES	PROTEIN	CARBS	FAT	FIBER	SUGAR	SODIUM

Nutrition information is an approximation and may vary depending on the brands and products used, exact ingredient quantities, and portion sizes.

Ingredients

Makes 10 · about 1 1/2 cups

- [ ] **2½ lb** boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- [ ] **1 tbsp** olive oil
- [ ] **2 tsp** ras el hanout
- [ ] **1½ tsp** garlic powder
- [ ] **1½ tsp** ground cumin
- [ ] **1 tsp** smoked paprika
- [ ] **1 tsp** ground coriander
- [ ] **½ tsp** cayenne pepper
- [ ] **¾ tsp** kosher salt
- [ ] **½ tsp** black pepper

ROASTED VEGETABLES

- [ ] **2 lb** sweet potatoes
- [ ] **1 large** red bell pepper
- [ ] **1 large** yellow onion
- [ ] **5–6 oz** baby carrots
- [ ] **1 whole** head garlic
- [ ] **2 tbsp** olive oil
- [ ] **1 tsp** olive oil, for roasting garlic
- [ ] **1 tbsp** ras el hanout
- [ ] **1½ tsp** ground cumin
- [ ] **1½ tsp** smoked paprika
- [ ] **1 tsp** ground coriander
- [ ] **½ tsp** cayenne pepper
- [ ] **¾ tsp** kosher salt
- [ ] **½ tsp** black pepper

CREAMY SOUP BASE

- [ ] **2 tbsp** tomato paste
- [ ] **1½ tbsp** spicy harissa sauce
- [ ] **2 tsp** ras el hanout
- [ ] **1 tsp** ground ginger
- [ ] **1 tsp** ground coriander
- [ ] **½ tsp** ground cumin
- [ ] **7 cups** low-sodium chicken broth, plus more as needed
- [ ] **1 can** (13.5–14 oz) light coconut milk
- [ ] Juice of ½ lemon

RICE, BOK CHOY & GARNISHES

- [ ] **1⅓ cups** uncooked jasmine rice
- [ ] **2–2½ lb** regular bok choy
- [ ] **2 tsp** olive oil
- [ ] **4 cloves** garlic, minced
- [ ] **¼ tsp** ground cumin
- [ ] **4 tbsp** chicken broth
- [ ] Black pepper, to taste
- [ ] Fresh cilantro or parsley, for garnish
- [ ] Lemon wedges, for serving
- [ ] Naan, optional

Ingredient note: Ras el hanout is a fragrant Moroccan spice blend that gives this soup its signature warmth and depth. Spice blends vary by brand, so adjust the heat to your preference. This recipe uses spicy harissa sauce and light coconut milk. Regular bok choy works beautifully, but baby bok choy can be substituted. Keep the rice and bok choy separate from the soup when storing leftovers to preserve their texture.

Instructions

1 Season the Chicken

Pat the chicken breasts dry with paper towels.

In a large bowl, combine 1 tablespoon olive oil, 2 teaspoons ras el hanout, 1½ teaspoons garlic powder, 1½ teaspoons cumin, 1 teaspoon smoked paprika, 1 teaspoon coriander, ½ teaspoon cayenne, ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon black pepper.

Coat the chicken thoroughly and refrigerate while preparing the vegetables.

2 Prepare the Vegetables

Preheat the oven to 425°F.

Wash and cut the sweet potatoes into large chunks or halves. Halve the red bell pepper and quarter the yellow onion. Leave the baby carrots whole.

Arrange the vegetables on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Drizzle with 2 tablespoons olive oil and season with 1 tablespoon ras el hanout, 1½ teaspoons cumin, 1½ teaspoons smoked paprika, 1 teaspoon coriander, ½ teaspoon cayenne, ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, and ½ teaspoon black pepper.

Cut the top off the whole garlic head to expose the cloves. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon olive oil and wrap loosely in aluminum foil.

3 Roast Until Tender

Place the vegetables and wrapped garlic in the oven.

Roast approximately 40–55 minutes, until the sweet potatoes are fork-tender, the peppers and onions are softened, and the garlic is soft and fragrant.

Set aside to cool slightly before blending.

Calorie Hacker Tip: Roasting develops deep, naturally sweet flavors and helps create a rich, creamy soup without adding heavy cream.

4 Sear and Cook the Chicken

Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat.

Sear the seasoned chicken breasts in batches for approximately 3–5 minutes per side, until nicely browned. Reduce the heat if the spices begin to burn.

Add approximately ½ cup chicken broth, cover, and finish cooking gently until the thickest part of the chicken reaches 165°F.

Transfer the chicken to a cutting board and let it rest before slicing.

Leave the browned bits and cooking juices in the Dutch oven for the soup base.

5 Build the Flavor Base

Reduce the Dutch oven heat to medium-low.

Add 2 tablespoons tomato paste, 1½ tablespoons spicy harissa, 2 teaspoons ras el hanout, 1 teaspoon ground ginger, 1 teaspoon coriander, and ½ teaspoon cumin.

Stir for approximately 30–60 seconds, just until fragrant. Add a splash of broth if the pan becomes dry.

Pour in approximately 1 cup chicken broth and scrape up the flavorful browned bits from the bottom of the pot.

6 Blend the Roasted Vegetables

Scoop the tender sweet potato flesh from the skins.

Squeeze the roasted garlic cloves from their skins.

Transfer the sweet potatoes, garlic, roasted peppers, onions, and carrots to a blender.

Add enough chicken broth to blend until completely smooth. Work in batches if needed.

> **Calorie Hacker Tip:** The roasted sweet potatoes and vegetables naturally thicken the soup, while light coconut milk adds a silky finish.

7 Finish the Soup

Pour the blended vegetables into the Dutch oven.

Add the remaining chicken broth and one can of light coconut milk, stirring until fully combined.

Simmer gently over medium-low heat for approximately 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add the juice of half a lemon.

Taste and adjust the harissa, spices, salt, or lemon as needed. Add additional broth if the soup is thicker than desired.

8 Prepare the Jasmine Rice

Rinse the jasmine rice until the water runs mostly clear.

Cook according to package directions until fluffy.

Keep warm until serving.

9 Sauté the Bok Choy

Wash the bok choy thoroughly and separate the stems from the leafy portions.

Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat.

Add the chopped stems and cook for approximately 2–3 minutes.

Add minced garlic, cumin, black pepper, and a splash of chicken broth.

Stir in the leafy greens and cook just until wilted, approximately 1–2 minutes.

Remove from heat while the bok choy is still vibrant and tender.

10 Assemble and Serve

Ladle the creamy roasted sweet potato soup into serving bowls.

Add a portion of jasmine rice, sliced Moroccan-spiced chicken, and sautéed bok choy.

Garnish with fresh cilantro or parsley and a squeeze of lemon.

Serve immediately, with naan on the side if desired.

Calorie Hacker Tip: Store the rice, chicken, and bok choy separately from the soup to keep their textures fresh for leftovers.

Big Flavor. Creamy Comfort. No Heavy Cream.

The Calorie Hack

Some recipes are worth making again before you've even finished your first bowl. This is one of them! This Moroccan-Spiced Chicken & Roasted Sweet Potato Soup started with a simple idea: create something rich, creamy, beautifully seasoned, and satisfying without relying on heavy cream. Sweet potatoes, carrots, red bell pepper, onion, and a whole head of garlic are roasted until tender, then blended into a velvety soup with light coconut milk, fragrant ras el hanout, and a little spicy harissa. Add juicy Moroccan-spiced chicken breast, fluffy jasmine rice, and tender sautéed bok choy, and you've got a complete meal that's as colorful as it is flavorful. The first test earned a happy dance from my husband and an immediate request from my son to put it into our regular dinner rotation. I'd say that's a pretty successful kitchen experiment!

Traditional approach	Our Calorie Hack
~~Heavy cream~~	✓ **Roasted vegetable puree + light coconut milk**
~~Cream-based thickening~~	✓ **Naturally creamy roasted sweet potatoes**
~~Rich, fatty cuts of meat~~	✓ **Lean, boldly seasoned chicken breast**
~~Extra oil for flavor~~	✓ **Roasting, aromatic spices, and harissa**

Why it works

- The secret to this soup's creamy texture isn't cream at all. It's the vegetables!
- Roasting sweet potatoes, carrots, red bell pepper, onion, and garlic develops their natural sweetness and creates deeper, more complex flavors. Once blended, the sweet potatoes give the soup a naturally thick, silky consistency without needing a flour-based roux or heavy cream.
- Light coconut milk adds a smooth, luxurious finish while keeping the soup dairy-free. Ras el hanout brings layers of warm, earthy spices, and harissa adds savory depth and gentle heat. A squeeze of fresh lemon at the end brightens everything and balances the sweetness of the roasted vegetables.
- Lean chicken breast provides protein, while jasmine rice and bok choy add texture, color, and substance. By serving these components separately in each bowl, you can adjust the portions to suit your appetite.
- The result is a comforting, flavor-packed soup that feels indulgent without depending on traditional cream-based thickening methods.

Make It a Meal

One serving: ~468 cal

With tender chicken, jasmine rice, and plenty of vegetables, this soup is already a satisfying meal on its own. But if you're feeding extra-hungry appetites or want something for dipping into that rich, velvety soup, here are a few delicious ways to round out your bowl without going overboard on calories.

- **Warm naan (¼ piece) +~65 cal**
  A small piece of warm naan for dipping into the creamy soup.
- **Cucumber & tomato salad +~45 cal**
  Fresh cucumber, tomatoes, lemon juice, herbs, and a little olive oil.
- **Simple green salad +~80 cal**
  Mixed greens, crunchy vegetables, and a light lemon vinaigrette.
- **Roasted cauliflower +~75 cal**
  Oven-roasted cauliflower seasoned with cumin, paprika, and garlic.
- **Lemon-garlic yogurt drizzle +~12 cal**
  A cool, tangy drizzle made with nonfat Greek yogurt, lemon, and garlic.

Illustrative estimates. Actual calories depend on portions, ingredients, and dressing.

Angie's Kitchen Notes

What we learned making it

1. **Roast the vegetables for maximum flavor.**
   Roasting the sweet potatoes, carrots, red bell pepper, onion, and garlic develops a deeper flavor and gives the finished soup its naturally creamy texture.
2. **Don't waste those chicken drippings.**
   Searing the seasoned chicken in the Dutch oven leaves behind flavorful browned bits. Building the soup in that same pot adds another layer of savory goodness.
3. **A whole head of roasted garlic is worth it.**
   Roasting mellows the garlic and allows it to blend smoothly into the soup without overpowering the other spices.
4. **Balance the sweetness with spice and acidity.**
   Sweet potatoes and carrots bring natural sweetness, while ras el hanout, harissa, and fresh lemon help create a more balanced, savory soup.
5. **Keep the toppings separate.**
   Adding the chicken, jasmine rice, and bok choy directly to individual bowls makes serving easier and helps preserve their textures when storing leftovers.

Storage & Reheating

- **Refrigerator:** Store the soup base, cooked chicken, jasmine rice, and bok choy in separate airtight containers in the refrigerator for up to 3–4 days. Keeping the components separate preserves their textures and makes leftovers easier to assemble.
- **Freezer:** Freeze the cooled soup base separately in airtight, freezer-safe containers for up to 3 months for best quality. Cooked chicken can also be frozen separately. For the best texture, prepare fresh rice and bok choy when serving.
- **Reheating:** Warm the soup gently in a saucepan over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally. Add a splash of chicken broth or water if it has thickened in the refrigerator. Reheat the chicken, rice, and bok choy separately until steaming hot, then assemble your bowl.
- **Food safety:** Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours of cooking in shallow containers for faster cooling. Keep refrigerated foods at 40°F or below and reheat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165°F. When reheating rice, make sure it was cooled promptly and refrigerated safely after cooking.

Leftover safety, the USDA way: Refrigerate within 2 hours · Enjoy within 3–4 days · Freeze for up to 3–4 months · Reheat to 165°F. USDA: Leftovers and Food Safety: fsis.usda.gov

Hack It Again

Cook once, eat twice

Turn the leftovers into tomorrow's lunch. Less waste, less money, less thinking.

- ****Moroccan Chicken & Rice Bowls**
  ** Reheat the sliced chicken and jasmine rice, then spoon a smaller amount of the thickened soup over the top as a flavorful sauce. Finish with fresh herbs and lemon.
- ****Creamy Moroccan Pasta**
  ** Toss leftover soup with cooked pasta for an easy, velvety sauce. Add leftover chicken and a handful of spinach for a completely different dinner.
- ****Spiced Chickpea Soup**
  ** Add a can of drained, rinsed chickpeas to leftover soup and simmer until heated through. Finish with lemon juice and fresh cilantro for an easy meatless variation.
- ****Roasted Vegetable Sauce**
  ** Reduce the soup gently until thickened, then spoon it over roasted cauliflower, chicken, or a grain bowl.
- ****Freezer-Friendly Soup Base**
  ** Freeze extra soup without the rice, chicken, or bok choy in individual portions. Thaw and reheat for an easy lunch, adding fresh toppings when serving.

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