When members of the FDNY aren't busy fighting fires, they're fighting their own rumbling stomachs with this spicy, vegetable-rich chicken stew.

**YIELDS: 8 servings**

**INGREDIENTS**

1 c. all-purpose flour

1 T. Coarse salt

1 Tsp. Freshly ground pepper

2.5 lb. boneless skinless chicken thighs cut into strips

1/2 c. extra-virgin olive oil

1 yellow onion

1 red bell peppers

1 poblano or Anaheim pepper

2 large carrots cut into ½” pieces

2 stalk celery cut into ½” pieces

1 or 2 clove(s) garlic, minced

2 large sprigs fresh thyme, chopped

1 dried bay leave

1/2 bottle brown ale

1-1/2 lb. Yukon gold potatoes, cut up

1/3 lb. okra if desired

4 c. canned low-sodium chicken stock

1 can peeled whole tomatoes with their liquid

3/4 c. fresh or frozen corn kernels

3/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

1/2 c. whole milk

1/3 c. coarsely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1/2 lemon

Hot sauce (optional)

**DIRECTIONS**

* In a large bowl, whisk together 1 cup of flour, 1 tablespoon salt, and 1 teaspoon black pepper. Add the chicken and toss well to evenly coat. Heat 1/4 cup olive oil over medium-high heat in a wide, heavy-bottomed pot. Add half of the chicken, and brown, turning once, until lightly golden, about 10 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer chicken to a large bowl. Add remaining 1/4 cup oil to the pot and brown remaining chicken; transfer to the bowl and set aside.
* Add the onions, peppers, carrots, celery, garlic, thyme, and bay leaves to the pot, and season well with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring frequently, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add ale and bring to a simmer, scraping the brown bits off the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Add potatoes, okra, chicken stock, tomatoes and their liquid, corn, and red pepper flakes, and bring the mixture to a boil. Add reserved chicken, reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover, and cook until vegetables and chicken are tender and cooked through, about 25 minutes.
* In a small bowl, whisk remaining 1/2 cup flour together with the milk until smooth. Stir mixture into the stew and return to a simmer. Cook until very thick, 2 to 3 minutes. Re-season with salt and pepper. Stir in the parsley and lemon juice. Serve with a dash of hot sauce, if desired.