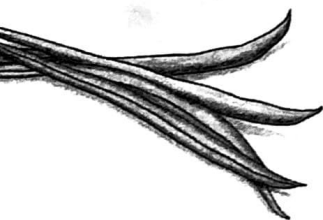


Minestrone

8 SERVINGS



Cut all the vegetables into bite-size pieces so that each spoonful will have a variety of tastes and textures.



Pesto is another excellent garnish for the soup.

Prepare:

1 cup dried cannellini or borlotti beans (see page 78)

This will yield 2½ to 3 cups of cooked beans. Reserve the cooking liquid.

Heat in a heavy-bottomed pan over medium heat:

¼ cup olive oil

Add:

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 carrots, peeled and finely chopped

Cook for 15 minutes, or until tender. Add:

4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped

5 thyme sprigs

1 bay leaf

2 teaspoons salt

Cook for 5 minutes longer. Add, and bring to a boil:

3 cups water

When boiling, add:

1 small leek, diced

½ pound green beans, cut into 1-inch lengths

Cook for 5 minutes, then add:

2 medium zucchini, cut into small dice

2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped

Cook for 15 minutes. Taste for salt and adjust as necessary.

Add the cooked beans, along with:

1 cup bean cooking liquid

2 cups spinach leaves, coarsely chopped (about 1 pound)

Cook for 5 minutes. If the soup is too thick, add more bean cooking liquid. Remove the bay leaf.

Serve in bowls, each one garnished with:

2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon or more grated Parmesan cheese



♦ *Fall Minestrone with Kale and Butternut Squash*: Follow the recipe, but add 2 finely chopped celery stalks to the soffritto and cook to a rich golden brown. Instead of thyme, add about $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chopped rosemary and 1 teaspoon chopped sage with the garlic. Borlotti or cranberry beans can be substituted for the cannellini beans. Omit the green beans, zucchini, fresh tomatoes, and spinach, and use instead 1 bunch kale, stemmed, washed, and chopped; 1 small can of tomatoes, drained and chopped; and $\frac{1}{2}$ butternut squash, peeled and cut into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch cubes (about 2 cups). Cook the tomatoes and kale with the soffritto for 5 minutes, add the water, and cook for 15 minutes. Add the squash and continue cooking until tender, about 10 to 15 minutes, before adding the cooked beans.

MINISTRONE

1/4 C OLIVE OIL +

2 ONIONS

4 CARROTS

4 CELERY STALKS

— 15 MINS

8 GARLIC CLOVES

1 TEASPOON ROSEMARY

2 TEASPOON SAGE

1 BAY LEAF

4 TEASPOONS SALT

— 5 MINS

BUTTERNUT - ONE MEDIUM-SIZED

ONE BUNCH KALE

— 5 MINS

6 CUP WATER

— 15 MINS

→ SQUASH
LEEK