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by Liz Robb

Minestrone Soup



Ingredients

2 onions
2 fat cloves of garlic
3 carrots
2 sticks of celery
1 large potato
100g cabbage
60g green beans
1 large courgette
100g canned borlotti beans
2 tablespoons of olive oil
A large knob of butter
150g chopped tomatoes
2 heaped tablespoons of tomato puree
1 litre of vegetable stock
50g small macaroni
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
A good handful of fresh basil
Parmesan cheese, or vegetarian alternative

Preparation

1. 1.
2. First prepare the vegetables. Peel the onions and garlic, and chop the onions finely. Peel the carrots and courgette, slice them into quarters lengthways then chop into pieces. Slice the celery in half lengthways then chop into thin pieces. Peel the potato and cut into small pieces. Cut the green beans into short lengths and chop the cabbage.
3. 2.
4. Heat 2 tablespoon of olive oil with the butter in a large saucepan and cook the onion gently for 5 minutes, until it is soft. Add the crushed garlic and cook for another 3-4 minutes. Add the celery, carrot and potato and cook over a low heat for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent the potatoes from sticking to the bottom.
5. 3.

6 Add the cabbage and green beans and cook for another 2-3 minutes.

7 4.

8 Add the chopped tomatoes and tomato puree then gradually stir in the hot stock. Season well with salt and pepper. Bring to a gentle simmer then cook for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

9 5.

10 Add the courgette and cook for another 10 minutes.

11 6.

12 Stir in the macaroni and cook for a final 15 minutes. Check the seasoning, and add a little more stock if needed

13 the soup should be substantial but not too thick.

14 Scatter a generous amount of freshly grated parmesan on top of each bowlful, or use an alternative hard cheese if cooking for vegetarians.

Cooks Note

There are so many different recipes for this well-known hearty Italian soup, including a wide variety of vegetables, different types of pasta or beans, and many of them including Parma ham or finely diced bacon.

The potato, macaroni and borlotti beans in this vegetarian recipe for minestrone soup make it a filling one pot meal, and it's a tasty way of making sure you eat plenty of fresh vegetables; you don't need to stick precisely to my choice of vegetables, adapt it to include any that you particularly like or want to use up.