



DR_x Sally's Kitchen

Updated Minestrone Soup with Pesto

(Italian Vegetable Soup)

Serves 2-4 in 60 minutes

My updated version of minestrone skips the pasta, while still satisfying the quest for a delicious bowl of colorful veggies to strengthen your immune response. Instead of macaroni, this minestrone features diced Yukon Gold potatoes, making it gluten-free. Cannellini beans (Italian white beans) are far more flavorful and easily digested than traditional red kidney beans. Leeks add a spring-green flavor and escarole (Italian lettuce) adds a silky texture. While this may seem like a lot of ingredients, each plays a vital role in making this dish sing! Finish your bowl with a dollop of "The Best Pesto" and shaved Parmesan Reggiano. *Buon Appetito!*

- ¼ c. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½ c. onion, finely diced
- 1 c. celery, finely diced
- 1 c. carrots, finely diced
- 1 c. fennel root, finely diced
- 1 c. leeks, rinsed and thinly sliced, just slightly into the green
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 t. each of dried (or fresh) thyme and oregano
- 1-2 bay leaves
- 4 c. chicken broth ("Imagine" Organic Free Range Chicken broth is great)
- 4 c. purified water
- 1 c. zucchini, sliced
- 1 medium Yukon gold potato, diced into ½ inch cubes
- 1 - 15 oz. can white cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 - 28 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 2 - 4 c. escarole or chard, thinly chopped
- 2 t. sea salt
- ½ t. ground black pepper
- 1 T. pesto, per bowl as a garnish
- Freshly shaved Parmesan Reggiano cheese, as garnish



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(cont)

1. Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot over medium. When it shimmers (15 - 30 seconds), add the onion, celery, carrots and fennel and sauté for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally until it just starts to turn golden.
2. Add the zucchini, potatoes, leeks, garlic, thyme, oregano, basil, and bay leaves and sauté for another 10 minutes. Stir in the broth and water, bring to a low boil, and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Stir in the cannellini beans, tomatoes, escarole, salt, and pepper and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
4. Adjust seasoning and garnish with a drizzle of pesto and shaved Parmesan.

The Best Pesto

Makes ~1 ½ cups in 10 minutes

Pesto is Italy's version of a "salsa verde" (or green sauce), made even more luscious with the addition of toasted pine nuts and Parmesan cheese. Pesto is the classic garnish to Italian minestrone soup, and it is so easy to make. The party starts with fresh basil leaves, which are packed with antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. Add garlic for some powerful antimicrobial effects and pour in good quality extra-virgin olive oil to create a medicinal sauce with multiple uses. It wakes up simple pasta, especially zoodles (zucchini or any squash noodles) and is wonderful when layered between ripe red tomatoes and fresh mozzarella cheese. *Buon appetito!*

- 2 cups loosely packed fresh basil leaves (not dried)
 - ¼ cup grated or shaved Parmesan Reggiano cheese
 - ¼ cup lightly toasted pine nuts
 - 2 cloves garlic, rough chopped
 - ½ teaspoon salt
 - 1/8 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil (EVOO)



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The Best Pesto

(cont)

1. Put all the ingredients into a food processor along with half of the olive oil.
2. Blend on low, while drizzling in the remaining olive until it forms a beautiful puree (about 30 seconds).
3. Store and refrigerate the remaining pesto to use within a week or two.