

Garden Vegetable Soup

This recipe calls for fresh vegetables, but substitute with frozen varieties if they are not available. By the way, tests show that frozen vegetables actually retain more of their vitamins and minerals because they are frozen so soon after harvesting.

Ingredients:

4	tablespoons olive oil	2	quarts vegetable broth
2	cups chopped leeks, white part only (from approximately 3 medium leeks)	4	cups peeled, seeded, and chopped tomatoes
2	tablespoons finely minced garlic	2	ears corn, kernels removed
	Salt	1/2	teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2	cups carrots, peeled and chopped into rounds (approximately 2 medium)	1/4	cup packed, chopped fresh parsley leaves
2	cups peeled and diced potatoes	1 - 2	teaspoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
2	cups fresh green beans, broken or cut into 3/4-inch pieces		

Preparation:

1. Heat the olive oil in large, heavy-bottomed stockpot over medium-low heat. Once hot, add the leeks, garlic, and a pinch of salt and sweat until they begin to soften, approximately 7 to 8 minutes.
2. Add the carrots, potatoes, and green beans and continue to cook for 4 to 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Add the stock, increase the heat to high, and bring to a simmer.
4. Once simmering, add the tomatoes, corn kernels, and pepper. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and cook until the vegetables are fork tender, approximately 25 to 30 minutes.
5. Remove from heat and add the parsley and lemon juice. Season, to taste, with kosher salt. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings

Greek Vegetable Stew

The Orthodox Greeks enter partial fasts as part of their religious practices. This recipe is one that's handed down and common among Greek families.

Ingredients:

2	tablespoons oil	2	cups celery leaves
2	onions, chopped	4	tomatoes, quartered
1	pound green string beans, broken in half	1	teaspoon salt
1	package frozen or fresh spinach	8	slices lemon
4	cups water	1	tablespoon dried oregano
6	zucchini, chunked	3	tablespoons fresh basil
4	yellow squash, chunked	2	cloves chopped garlic
		2	tablespoons lemon juice

Preparation:

1. Lightly brown onions in a hot dry skillet in 2 tablespoons oil.
2. Add oregano and garlic, cook 1 minute.
3. Add 4 cups water and tomatoes. Cook 10 minutes.
4. Add remaining ingredients. Cook covered for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. Serve with a lemon slice in each bowl.

Yield: eight servings

Red Bean Soup

Beans are so rich in vitamins and protein. Plus they are excellent for our digestive systems! Serve this soup with a fresh vegetable plate and bean dip or a nice green salad.

Ingredients:

1	tablespoon olive oil	2	quarts vegetable stock
1 ½	cups chopped yellow onions	1	teaspoon salt
¼	cup chopped green bell peppers	3	tablespoons chopped parsley
1	tablespoon minced garlic	1	cup diced carrots
4	bay leaves	1 ½	cups cooked long-grain brown rice, warm
2	cups dried red kidney beans, soaked overnight	6	tablespoons chopped green onions
1	tablespoon Special Seasoning, (recipe follows on next page)		

Preparation:

1. Heat the oil in a large heavy pot over high heat. Add the onions, bell peppers, garlic, and bay leaves, and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes.
2. Add the beans and cook for 2 minutes.
3. Add the Special Seasoning and stock, stir well, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 1 1/2 hours, until beans are tender, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the salt and parsley, cover the pot, and cook for 15 minutes. Discard the bay leaves. Remove 1 cup of beans from the pot and reserve.
5. With a hand-held immersion blender, or in batches in a food processor, puree the red beans. Add the reserved beans, and stir well.
6. To serve, ladle a generous cup of the soup into each of 6 bowls.
7. Top each serving with 1/4 cup of the rice and 1 tablespoon of green onions.

Yield: six servings

Special Seasoning

This seasoning is great for soups and to sprinkle over salads. You can also whisk the seasoning with extra virgin olive oil to spice up a simple green salad.

Ingredients:

2 ½	tablespoons paprika	1	tablespoon onion powder
2	tablespoons salt	1	tablespoon cayenne pepper
2	tablespoons garlic powder	1	tablespoon dried leaf oregano
1	tablespoon black pepper	1	tablespoon dried thyme

Preparation:

1. Place all ingredients into a small bowl.
2. Thoroughly mix with a whisk.
3. Store your Special Seasoning in an airtight jar or container.

Yield: about 2/3 cup

Tip: Play around with this recipe and make it your very own family spice!