

Adapted from the Soupmaker's Kitchen by Aliza Green

Winter Vegetable Soup

The following recipe may easily be varied according to availability. Use whatever vegetables look the best and are in season--the more kinds of veggies, the better the soup. Keep a good variety of textures and colors using greens, root vegetables, tomatoes, squash, and beans. You may also serve the soup over a slice of crusty bread brushed with olive oil and crushed garlic and then toasted. Top with grated Parmesan or Pecorino cheese just before serving if desired.

Makes about 1 gallon, serves 8 to 12

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| 1 cup (235 ml) extra-virgin olive oil, divided | 1 quarter of a savoy cabbage, cored, shredded and cut into short lengths |
| 3 ribs celery, trimmed and sliced | Stems from chard, thinly sliced (preferably ruby chard) |
| 3 carrots, trimmed and diced | 3 cups cooked white beans or kidney beans (from ½ pound dried beans) |
| 2 medium onions, trimmed and diced | 1 pound chopped plum tomatoes (canned or fresh) |
| 4 cloves garlic, minced or pressed | 3 quarts boiling water (or Vegetable Stock) |
| 1 small head fennel, trimmed and diced | Fresh herbs (basil, thyme, parsley), chopped |
| 2 pounds diced mixed firm seasonal vegetables, such as butternut squash, green beans, celery root, turnip, parsnip, and/or rutabagas | Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste |
| 1 pound zucchini and/or yellow square, trimmed and diced | |
| 1 bunch chard greens or Tuscan kale, stems removed, washed and cut into thin strips and/or | |

In a large heavy-bottomed soup pot, add half the olive oil, the carrots, onions, celery, fennel, and hot pepper. Cook together until crisp-tender, about 5 minutes, then add the mixed vegetables. Bring back to the boil and cook 5 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Add the greens and chard stems stir to combine. Bring back to the boil and cook over medium heat until the greens are soft, stirring once or twice. Add the tomatoes and cook together until the vegetables are mostly tender, about twenty minutes.

Add the boiling water (or Vegetable Stock) and simmer fifteen minutes longer or until the vegetables are quite tender, adding more water as needed to make a chunky soup with a moderate amount of broth and skimming as needed. Taste for seasoning, adding salt and pepper and the fresh herbs.

Save for stock: celery, carrot and onion trimmings, garlic skins and trimmings, tomato cores, zucchini tops, yellow squash tops, butternut parings & seed portion, fennel (tough outer layers, trimmings, larger stalks), green beans ends, and celery root parings.