

Coral Tree Cafe Vegetable Soup

Makes 8 to 10 servings

2 tablespoons oil

2 cups diced carrots

2 cups diced onions

1/2 cup diced red bell pepper

1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme

3/4 cup pearl barley

1 quart vegetable broth

1 1/2 cups prepared marinara sauce

2 cups quartered mushrooms

2 cups diced zucchini

Salt and pepper

1. Heat a medium, heavy-bottom pot over medium heat until hot. Add the oil, then add the carrots, onions, bell pepper, thyme, and barley. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are golden-brown, about 18 minutes, taking care that the barley does not burn.

2. Stir in the vegetable broth and marinara. Cover and bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer.

3. Cook until the barley is al dente, 6 to 8 minutes. Stir in the mushrooms and zucchini, and season to taste with salt and pepper (the amount of seasoning needed will vary depending on the vegetable broth and marinara used). Cover and continue to simmer until the mushrooms and zucchini are just tender, 4 to 6 minutes.

4. Remove from heat, thin if desired, and season again to taste, and serve. This makes about 2 1/2 quarts of soup.

Per serving (based on 10 servings): 155 calories; 4 grams protein; 26 grams carbohydrates; 6 grams fiber; 4 grams fat; 1 milligram cholesterol; 8 grams sugar; 365 milligrams sodium.

I found it was necessary to add more vegetable broth at the end as it was quite thick.