

# Minestrone Soup



## ingredients

- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 sweet yellow onion, chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 medium ribs celery, chopped
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 2 cups chopped seasonal vegetables (potatoes, yellow squash, zucchini, parsnips, green beans or peas)
- 5 minced garlic cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 large can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes, with liquid
- 32 ounces vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 bay leaves
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup elbow or small shell pasta
- 1 can (15 ounces) Great Northern or Cannellini beans
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 1 teaspoons lemon juice
- Freshly grated Parmesan cheese, for garnishing

**Go to page 2 for recipe directions ...**



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## directions

1. Cook the pasta al dente according to package instructions. Rinse with cold water and drain well. Set aside.
2. Place 3 tablespoons of olive oil in a large Dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Once the oil has heated, add the chopped onion, carrot, celery, tomato paste and a pinch of salt.
3. Sauté until the veggies are soft and the onions are translucent. Add the seasonal vegetables, garlic, oregano and thyme. Cook until the herbs are aromatic, about 2 minutes.
4. Pour in the diced tomatoes and juices, broth and water. Add the salt, bay leaves and red pepper flakes.
5. Raise heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to a boil and cover. Reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer.
6. Cook for 15 minutes, then remove the lid and add the pasta, beans and greens. Continue simmering, uncovered, for about 5 minutes or until the greens are tender.
7. Remove the pot from the heat. Remove the bay leaves. Stir in the lemon juice and remaining tablespoon of olive oil. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper as desired.
8. Garnish each bowl of soup with fresh grated Parmesan.
9. Serve with warm bread sticks or Italian bread.