

Minestrone

Literally meaning "the big soup" in Italian, minestrone is a hearty stew-like soup made from vegetables, dried beans and pasta. The range of beans and vegetables can be substituted – a great opportunity to empty out the crisper of your fridge!

Ingredients

- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 sticks of celery
- 1 leek
- 1 clove of garlic
- 30mls (1 ½ tablespoons) olive oil
- 200g pumpkin
- 1 potato
- 400g can crushed tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons (40mls) tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 4 cups (1 L) vegetable stock
- ¼ cup small pasta (such as rissoni or small shells)
- 2 zucchiní
- 400g can kidney or cannellini beans
- ½ cup flat-leafed parsley
- salt and black pepper
- 20g parmesan and crusty bread to serve.

Method

- Peel and dice onion and carrots, slice celery and leek and crush garlic.
- Heat oil in large saucepan and sweat onion, carrots, celery, leek and garlic for 5 minutes.
- Peel and dice pumpkin and potato.
- Place pumpkin, potatoes, tomatoes, tomato paste, oregano and basil in the large saucepan along with vegetable stock.
- Bring to the boil over a medium-high heat.
- Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for 40 minutes.
- Add pasta and cook for a further 10 minutes.
- Slice zucchini, add to the pan and cook for a further 10 minutes.
- Drain and rinse beans and add to the saucepan, cook for another 5 minutes.
- Pluck parsley leaves from stalk, finely chop and add to saucepan. Season to taste.
- Finely grate parmesan cheese.
- To serve, ladle into bowls, sprinkle with parmesan and eat with crusty bread.