

My Traditional Winter Minestrone



Fresh homemade vegetable soup shows up on Italian kitchen tables all year long. Whatever fresh vegetables are already in the fridge, or growing in the vegetable garden or are the seasonal choices at the greengrocer's is what constitutes that day's "minestrone" or large pot of soup.

In the States we can easily find zucchini in the winter and broccoli in the summer but I stick pretty much to the traditional winter/spring/summer/fall vegetables. Here's how I make my minestrone during the winter months.

Serving size: 1 ½ cups. Serves 8.

Ingredients

- 1 large leek, white part only, washed, cut into ¼" horizontal slices
- 1 large white potato (approx. 8 oz), peeled, washed, diced
- 2 celery stalks, washed, cut into ½" horizontal slices
- 3 medium carrots, washed, cut into 1/4" horizontal slices
- 6 oz butternut squash, peeled, washed, diced
- 6 oz cauliflower or broccoli, washed, broken into small florets
- 4 oz fresh spinach, thoroughly washed, coarsely chopped
- 4 peeled canned tomatoes, seeds removed, cut into 8 pieces
- 4 sprigs flat leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 1 oz parmigiano cheese rind, scrubbed, cut into small pieces

Directions

Prepare all individual vegetables, parsley and cheese as indicated in the list of ingredients and add them and the salt all at once to a large soup pot. Pour in 2 ½ quarts of cold water, place the lid on the pot and bring to a boil using a high flame (this will take about 25 minutes). Lower the flame and simmer for approximately 1 hour.

Allow the soup to cool down a bit to prevent splattering. Using a handheld immersion mixer or a food blender, pulse the vegetables in batches to attain a chunky semi-pureed mixture. Heat before serving.

Note: If preferred, the cooked vegetables can be left intact and served directly from the pot. Pastina, such as small shells or ditalini, may be added. The cheese rind may also be eliminated if none is available.

Nutritional Information

Calories: 87

Carbohydrates: 16 g

Protein: 4 g

Fat: 1 g

Saturated Fat: < 1 g

Cholesterol: 2 mg

Fiber: 4 g

GI Value: 44 - low