

Minestrone Soup

Ingredients

A little oil
1 onion, chopped
2 carrots, peeled and chopped
3 large celery sticks, chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
50g diced ham or bacon (optional)
Bay leaf
Sprig of rosemary
2 tbsp tomato purée
400g tin chopped tomatoes
1.2 litres low salt vegetable or chicken stock, made from stock cubes
400g tin cannellini beans
100g dried spaghetti, broken into short lengths
¼ head green cabbage or other leafy green veg, finely shredded
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Minestrone is a cheap and filling dish, perfect for this time of year. The beans are packed full of protein and minerals such as iron. The beans and veg are both great sources of fibre



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Method:

1. Chop the onion, celery, carrots into a dice and fry gently in a little oil with the chopped garlic until soft
2. Add the bay leaf, rosemary sprig, tomato, tomato puree and stock and bring to a simmer
3. Add the pasta and beans. Simmer until the pasta is cooked.
4. When the pasta is cooked, add the cabbage or greens and simmer for 1 minute. Season with black pepper. You may need to add a little salt too, but taste first to check.

Top tips

This is a hearty soup and served with bread it could be a whole meal, as it includes carbohydrate, protein and fibre.

You could add 50 g of diced ham or bacon to the soup, you'd want to fry the bacon when you fry the onion, celery and carrot.

If you don't have spaghetti you could use other pasta shapes broken into small pieces. If you wanted to add more fibre you could use wholemeal spaghetti or pasta shapes.

You could add a drizzle of salsa verde to add extra flavour and make it look even more delicious.

Salsa Verde

Ingredients:

100g each of parsley, basil, mint and coriander
1 bunch of spring onions (just the green bits)
1 clove garlic
50g drained capers
1 teaspoon whole grain mustard
Olive oil

Method:

1. Place the herbs and spring onion tops into a food processor
2. Whiz round until well chopped.
3. Add the mustard, capers and garlic. Continue to blend adding enough olive oil until it is a smooth purée.

If you prefer not to use a food processor, or you don't have one, then finely chop the ingredients by hand before stirring through the olive oil and mustard.



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Top tips

This is a really lovely flavourful sauce, keep it in your fridge and add a drizzle of it to soups, stews, pasta or anything else you fancy!

You can use any soft herbs you have (avoid the waxier herbs such as rosemary) and it's a great way to extend the life of any herbs you've not managed to use.

Soft herbs such as basil and mint are a great source of minerals and vitamins.