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VERSATILE VEGETABLE SOUP

How to Make a Great Pot of Soup All Year Long!

Naturally Delicious Recipes • Janice Feuer-Haugen

“Troubles are easier to take with soup than without.”

—AN OLD YIDDISH SAYING

Make a big batch of deeply flavored vegetable soup throughout the year using this recipe template as your guide. Customize the ingredients to suit your taste, the season, and what’s in your pantry, refrigerator or garden. With this *Versatile Vegetable Soup* recipe in hand, you can easily prepare a healthy and delicious vegetable soup all year long. Your kitchen will smell wonderful, you’ll have a great pot of soup simmering on the stove and soon, a nurturing meal-in-a-bowl on the table.

Change Up the Grains, Lentils or Other Legumes

Cooking brown rice, quinoa, barley, farro, wild rice, lentils, etc. in some of the soup stock makes for a rich flavor and smooth-textured broth. When cooked, stir them into the soup about 5 minutes before adding the greens.

Customize Your Versatile Vegetable Soup

- ♥ Start with the basic vegetables, i.e., members of the onion family plus garlic, carrots and celery.
- ♥ Vary the rest of the vegetables, including longer-cooked (i.e., root vegetables and winter squashes), and faster-cooking vegetables (i.e., summer squash, green beans, broccoli, corn).
- ♥ Play with different spices and herbs altering the taste from Italian (basil, oregano, Italian parsley, fennel), to French (rosemary, tarragon, chives, chervil) to Indian (cumin, turmeric, cardamom, ginger) to Mexican (cilantro, chili peppers and/or chili powder, coriander, cumin, Mexican oregano), etc.
- ♥ Finishing soup with your choice of fresh greens adds both color and nutrition.
- ♥ An optional spoonful of soft goat cheese, grated Pecorino or Parmesan, sour cream or yogurt added to each bowl adds a bit of creaminess.
- ♥ A dollop of any variety of pesto brings freshness along with a taste of summertime.



For the Best Soup, Make Your Own Stock!

If you’ve been collecting your parsley stems and vegetable peels and trimmings in a bag in your freezer, now’s the time to make your own stock.

Along with these frozen items, add some fresh vegetables, a piece of kombu seaweed, dried mushrooms, smashed garlic cloves, and some spices. You’ll find a very flavorful recipe on my website for *Homemade Umami Rich Vegetable Stock*. ♥

Recipe on next page...

Versatile Vegetable Soup

This recipe makes a large batch of soup, giving you leftovers with perhaps a quart for the freezer, too. Cooking for one? halve or quarter the recipe.

- ♥ Stocks are unseasoned. Broths contain salt. And commercial broths often contain a lot of salt. If you are using a commercial broth (versus home-made stock), reduce the amount of salt in this recipe by half. Then adjust the salt to taste in Step 10.
- ♥ Besides grains and legumes, noodles are an option as well. To keep them from absorbing too much liquid, precook them and toss them with a little oil. Then, either add the noodles directly to the pot of soup, or to individual bowls before topping them with the hot soup.
- ♥ If you used dried mushrooms in your stock, discard the tough stems and pieces, and coarsely chop the tender ones and add them to your soup.
- ♥ It's naturally gluten-free and vegan.

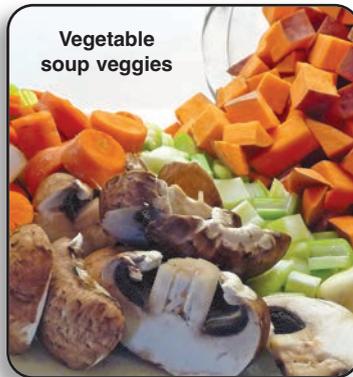
Yield: About 6 quarts soup

Total time: About 1 ½ hours,

2 ½ hours with your own vegetable stock

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive or coconut oil
- ¾ cup brown or wild rice, quinoa, barley or farro or 1 ½ cups brown or green lentils or 2 cups of pre-cooked beans
- 3+ quarts homemade vegetable stock or commercially-prepared vegetable broth, divided
- ⅛ teaspoon sea salt
- 3+ cups ¼-inch diced or sliced onion, leeks and/or shallots
- 2 cups carrots, ⅓-inch dice
- 1 ½ cups celery, ⅓-inch dice
- 2 large garlic cloves, peeled, pressed in a garlic press
- 1 ½ tablespoons sea salt
- 12 twists freshly ground pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 6–7 cups ½-inch diced longer-cooking vegetables, such as unpeeled sweet potatoes (my favorites), other potatoes, and/or peeled winter squash, turnip, rutabaga or celeriac
- 1–2 cups additional faster-cooking vegetables such as: ½-inch diced fennel or summer squash, sliced mushrooms, green beans, florets of broccoli or cauliflower
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon dried or 1 tablespoon fresh Italian herbs such as rosemary, oregano, basil or your favorite herb(s)
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme or 3-4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 29-ounce can whole (roughly chopped in a food processor) or diced, fire-roasted tomatoes with their liquid
- 6 cups packed (5 ounces) thinly-sliced spinach, chard leaves or power greens. If using chard, ¼-inch dice the stems and add them with the herbs
- **Optional:** frozen, defrosted corn or green peas (especially when fresh vegetables are scarce)



OPTIONAL GARNISHES

- Any variety of pesto
- Thinly sliced scallions
- Coarsely chopped parsley, cilantro, basil or other fresh herbs
- Coarsely chopped fennel fronds
- Grated Pecorino or Parmesan cheese
- Crumbled goat cheese

PREPARATION

- 1)** If you are going to make your own vegetable stock, prepare it first thing as it requires 1 hour of simmering.
- 2)** Cook your choice of grains or lentils in a quart of your vegetable stock seasoned with 1/8th teaspoon salt. Note: as quinoa is quick cooking, add it raw or toasted in step 6.
- 3)** Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven over medium-low heat. When hot add the onion. Cover the pot and cook 7 minutes.
- 4)** Raise the heat to medium. Stir in the diced carrot, celery and pressed garlic. Sprinkle with the freshly ground pepper. Sauté for 5 minutes.
- 5)** Move the vegetables to the side of the pan. Place the tomato paste in the center of the pan. Stir for 5-6 minutes until the tomato paste has darkened in color and become dry.
- 6)** Stir in the salt along with your choice of longer-cooking vegetables. If using fennel and mushrooms, stir them in now along with dried and/or fresh herbs. When well mixed, stir in the chopped or diced tomatoes along with their liquid. Then stir in 8 cups of stock.
NOTE: With raw or toasted quinoa, add it to the pot along with an additional 2 cups of stock.
- 7)** Bring the soup to a boil and lower the heat. Simmer, partially covered, for 10 minutes. Stir in the quicker-cooking vegetables and cook another 5 minutes. Stir in the cooked grains, lentils or beans along with the chard stems, if using. Continue simmering the soup for another 5 minutes.
- 8)** If you would like a thicker broth, purée one-quarter to one-third of the soup in a blender.
- 9)** Remove bay leaves, rosemary and/or thyme stems. Stir in the sliced chard, spinach or power greens mix. Cook until tender, 3–5 minutes.
- 10)** Adjust the salt and pepper to taste.
- 11)** If using frozen, defrosted vegetables, add them now. If your soup becomes overly thick with vegetables, add additional stock to thin it to soup consistency.
- 12)** Garnish each bowl of **Versatile Vegetable Soup** with any of the optional garnishes. ■

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