

Chef Mike's Minestrone Soup

Ingredients:

3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons minced garlic
½ cup chopped onions
½ cup peeled, chopped carrots
¼ cup chopped zucchini, or other seasonal squash ¼ cup sun-dried tomatoes (not packed in oil)
8 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
½ cup cooked white beans
2 tablespoons tomato paste
¼ cup whole wheat pasta of choice
1 cup shredded kale, or other dark greens
3 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
3 tablespoons chopped parsley
Salt and pepper to taste

Instructions:

Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium high heat.
Add garlic, onions, carrots and sauté until translucent.
Add zucchini and sun-dried tomatoes and sauté 3-4 mins.
Add vegetable broth and beans.
Whisk in tomato paste until dissolved.
Bring mixture to a boil. Add pasta and reduce heat. Cook until pasta is tender.
Add kale, basil, parsley and stir until wilted.
Serve immediately!

Makes 4 servings • Serving size = 2 cups • 220 calories • 11g fat • 370mg sodium • 21g carbohydrate • 5g fiber • 4g protein

*as always lots of substitutions can be made in this recipe. There are many different types of squash that can be used. Butternut, yellow, zucchini, acorn or Delicata. You get the idea - Remember think seasonally! Don't have white beans – use red, black, pinto or any other type of bean. Dried beans are excellent too – but I would cook them separately or in the soup with increased liquid(stock). Whole wheat pasta is not a must – if you like white flour pasta, then use it. Sometimes I finish the soup with a really nice olive oil just for another kick of flavor. Try splashing some balsamic vinegar in here too! Maybe add some old bread crumbs to the soup! Hope these notes help!



Seeded Squash and Feta Muffins



Ingredients

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 cups cubed pumpkin or butternut squash, ½ inch cubes
Salt and pepper to taste
1 large handful of baby spinach, chopped
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
¼ cup sunflower seeds kernels
½ cup cubed feta
1 tablespoon whole-grain mustard
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
¾ cup milk
2/3 cups whole wheat pastry flour
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
4 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

Instructions

Preheat oven to 400°F, with rack in the top third. Grease a muffin tin with 1 tablespoon of olive oil or line with paper liners.

Sprinkle remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil and some salt and pepper over the squash. Toss well and turn onto a baking sheet or roasting pan. Arrange in a single layer and bake for 15 - 25 minutes or until cooked through entirely. Set aside to cool. You can do this step a couple days in advance, and refrigerate the squash until you're ready to use it.

Transfer two-thirds of the squash to a large mixing bowl along with the spinach, parsley, sunflower seeds, two-thirds of the feta, and all of the mustard. Gently fold together. In a separate bowl beat the eggs and milk together and add to the squash mix. Sift the flour and baking powder onto the squash mix, top with the salt and a generous dose of freshly ground black pepper and fold together just until the batter comes together, be careful not to over mix.

Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan, filling each hole 3/4 full, top each muffin with a bit of the remaining squash and feta. Bake for 15-20 minutes or until the tops and sides of the muffins are golden, and the muffins have set up completely. Let cool for a couple minutes then turn out onto a cooling rack. I like these muffins cooled a bit, served just warmer than room temperature.

Recipe adapted by Kip Hardy from <https://www.101cookbooks.com/pumpkin-and-feta-muffins/>