

## Provençal Style Winter Vegetable Soup

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Serves 8

### Ingredients

1 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 small onion, diced  
2 cloves garlic, sliced  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
2 medium carrots, chopped  
2 medium parsnips, chopped  
5 cups + chicken or vegetable stock  
3 fresh thyme sprigs  
1/2 tsp. Herbes de Provence  
Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste  
8-10 mini red potatoes, halved  
1 1/4 cups fresh green beans, ends trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces  
1 cup frozen peas  
1 can white kidney (cannellini) beans, drained and rinsed  
1 28 oz. can whole plum tomatoes, with juice  
3-4 handfuls chopped fresh spinach

In a large soup pot (5 1/2 - 6 quarts), heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring until softened. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add celery, carrots and parsnips and cook, stirring, for 3-4 minutes. Add chicken stock, thyme sprigs, Herbes de Provence and a bit of salt and pepper. Raise heat under pot to medium-high and bring stock to a boil. Lower heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes. Add potatoes and green beans and simmer an additional 10-15 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.

Add frozen peas and kidney beans and simmer 5 minutes. Add tomatoes by hand-crushing them into the soup, adding the juice as well. Add the spinach. Simmer 10-15 minutes more, to allow flavors to blend. If soup is too thick, add a bit more chicken stock to thin.

Taste soup and add salt and pepper, as needed. You may also like to stir in a few more fresh thyme leaves at this point.

### Cook's Notes:

Soups like this one are endlessly customizable and perfect for using up odds and ends of vegetables in your fridge or freezer. Just remember to add the vegetables in the order of how long they take to cook, so root vegetables first and greens like spinach or kale at the end.

Cooking time may vary, depending on how vigorous your simmering is. Taste test the vegetables to ensure they are all tender.

## **GUASTELLO'S VILLAGE MARKET**

Be sure to taste your soup at the end and add more salt and pepper, as needed. If you taste your soup and it seems "bland", add salt and keep adding, a bit at a time, until the flavors shine! A good salting will ensure a flavorful soup. I also like to stir in some more fresh thyme leaves at the end, for an extra bit of herb flavor.

Left-overs will keep well in the fridge or freeze.

If you have some pancetta or bacon on hand and would like to add another layer of flavor, fry some in the pot until golden before adding the onions. (If a lot of fat renders off, remove most of it before adding the onion).

***Credit: seasonsandsuppers.com***