

Laura's Basic Vegetable Soup

One large red or yellow onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, chopped

2 ribs celery, chopped

2 carrots, chopped

1/2 cabbage, shredded

Choice or combination of: String beans, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli (or any other vegetable)

1/2 teaspoon, dried or 1 teaspoon fresh seasoning

Choose 1 or 2 seasonings to taste. Sage and rosemary work well together.

Other suggestions; thyme, marjoram, basil, or oregano

8 cups liquid; vegetable stock ("Better than Bouillon" comes in a jar) and/or fat free beef or chicken broth, or a combination. The liquid should just cover the cut-up vegetables.

OPTIONS: 1 16-ounce can whole tomatoes; beans: lentils, split peas (no need to soak either), cannellini, lima, navy, etc.

Sauté the onion, garlic, celery and carrots until they soften, about 10 – 15 minutes. Add cabbage and any other vegetables you want (no others are needed if you're using beans).

Use the first four ingredients as a base and then whatever you have on hand. Simmer 1 - 2 hours, or longer.

Taste to adjust seasoning. You can purée part in a blender to thicken, or use a hand-held pureeing appliance. I usually store the soup in quart containers and freeze a few portions. Then I can rotate an all-vegetable soup with lentil soup, white bean soup, etc. Different beans make very different soups. I love the giant lima beans. Add leftover vegetables as you have them. I even add leftover salad to a portion, as long as there's no yogurt in the dressing. Mustard and vinegar just make the soup tangy. You never need to waste vegetables if you've got a soup in the refrigerator. Don't discard the tough, outer leaves of a head of lettuce; throw them in the soup. You can't make a mistake with vegetable soup. Any combination will work. Adding beans makes it much heartier.

To defat regular broth, store in the refrigerator and remove the hardened fat