

Summertime Vegetable Stew

Recipe 204 of 365

A hybrid of chili, minestrone, and plenty of fresh summer vegetables, you might also call this Hot Salad Stew. It blends the convenience of cans with the bounty of the summer farmer's markets. Serve as is, over rice, or with a hunk of good crusty bread, with or without grated Parmesan or cheddar cheese.

TIME: 30 minutes active time

MAKES: 6 servings

2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 tablespoon chopped fresh oregano, or 2 teaspoons dried
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 (15-ounce) can red kidney beans
1 (15-ounce) can black beans
1 (15-ounce) can tomato sauce
2 cups chicken stock (homemade, if possible)
1 yellow bell pepper, cut into 3/4" pieces
1 red bell pepper, cut into 3/4" pieces
3/4 pound green beans, trimmed and cut into 3/4" pieces
2 cups fresh corn (cut from 2 cobs)
3 tomatoes, chopped
Hot sauce, such as Tabasco or Cholula (optional)

Heat a large soup pot over medium heat. When hot, add the oil, then the onions, and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the garlic and oregano and season with salt and pepper, and cook another 3 minutes, stirring frequently.

Add the red and black beans, the tomato sauce, and the chicken stock, stir to combine, and bring to a boil. Season again with salt and pepper. Reduce heat and simmer soup for 30 minutes over low heat, stirring two or three times during simmering.

Note: Because this soup's flavor relies on the texture of fresh vegetables, it won't taste quite the same if you freeze it. If you'd like to make a freezable soup, cook the soup up to this point, season, let cool to room temperature, and refrigerate overnight. Stir fresh vegetables into cold soup base, and freeze (they'll cook as you reheat the soup).

Add the peppers, beans, and corn, and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the beans are al dente. Stir in the tomatoes, season to taste with salt, pepper, and a dash of hot sauce, if desired, and serve hot.