

Tuscan Vegetable Soup (for 4)

Source: Casual Cuisines of the World – Trattoria (Weldon Owen)

Spelt, an ancient variety of wheat known in Italy as farro, is highly prized in Tuscany for its pleasantly nutty flavor and slightly crunchy texture. Look for it in well-stocked Italian shops or health-food stores.

INGREDIENTS:

1 C spelt, barley OR long-grain white rice
4-5 C water
2 broccoli stalks
1 small leek, white part only
1 small celery stalk
1 large carrot, peeled
2 TBS extra-virgin olive oil + more for garnish
1 C chopped yellow onion
1 1/2 C peeled/seeded/chopped plum (Roma) tomatoes (fresh or canned)
1/2 C peeled/thinly sliced white turnip
5 C vegetable OR meat stock
3/4 C diagonally sliced green beans
1 small zucchini, cut in half lengthwise/thinly sliced crosswise
Freshly grated good-quality Italian Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS:

In bowl, combine spelt + 3 C water - let stand 1 hour - meanwhile, cut broccoli, leek, celery + carrots into slices 1/4" thick - set aside.

In soup pot over low heat, warm 2 TBS olive oil - add onion - sauté till translucent (about 5 minutes) - add tomatoes - sauté 2 minutes - drain spelt - add to pot, along with turnip, broccoli, leek, celery + carrot – cook 3 minutes, stirring. Add stock + another 1 C water - bring to boil - reduce heat to low, cover/simmer 15 minutes. Add green beans + zucchini – cover - continue to simmer, stirring occasionally, till vegetables are soft yet retain shape and grain is tender (35-40 minutes) - if soup is too thick, stir in remaining 1 C water - season to taste with salt + pepper.

TO SERVE: Ladle soup into warmed individual soup bowls - lace each serving with a thin drizzle of olive oil and sprinkle cheese on top - serve immediately.

Nutrition Facts: Calories: 411 Fat: 16g Carbohydrates: 64g Cholesterol: 0mg Sodium: 89mg Protein: 11g Fiber: 8g % Cal. from Fat: 35% % Cal. from Carbs: 62%