



# 'Hearty' vegetable, soy bean & barley minestrone

This delicious Mediterranean-inspired soup is a bowlful of goodness for both your heart and soul.

🕒 Prep time: 15 minutes. Cooking time: 1½ – 2 hours. 🍴 Serves 8

Vegetarian, wheat-free

## Ingredients

1 onion, diced

1 leek, white part only, cut in half and chopped

1-2 cloves garlic, finely chopped

2 carrots, diced

2 stalks celery, sliced

2 zucchinis, quartered and sliced

Optional other vegetables of your choice such as 2-3 handfuls of green beans, chopped in thirds

Bunch of black kale (cavalo nero), stripped from stalks, and chopped roughly (can substitute ½ cabbage)

1-2 400g tins of crushed tomatoes (depending on preferred thickness and tomato base) OR 700 mls of tomato passata if you prefer a less chunky soup

1 400g tin of soybeans, or 1 cup dried soy beans soaked overnight in water, then rinsed

Ingredients continued on the following page...



## Method

In a large pot, heat olive oil. Lightly sauté onions and leek (do not brown), then add garlic, carrots and celery, cook for 2 minutes. Add zucchini and green beans, cook for another 2 minutes. Add kale and stir regularly, until kale is slightly wilted. Add barley, stir to combine. If using soaked dried soy beans, add to pot with barley. Traditional recipes cook for two hours, so if using dried beans, 1½-2 hours is needed. If using canned beans, do not add yet.

Add canned tomatoes or passata, stock, and extra water if necessary, to cover (if using dried soy beans, more water will be required as they absorb the water). Add cheese rind and bay leaves.

Bring to a gentle simmer and allow to simmer for at least one hour. If using canned soy beans, add now and cook for another 20-30 minutes. Stir in fresh basil. Taste and season if required.

Remove cheese rind and bay leaves. Serve with warm, crusty wholegrain bread brushed with extra virgin olive oil and rubbed with clove of garlic.



## 'Hearty' vegetable, soy bean & barley minestrone cont'd

### Ingredients cont'd

1-1½ cups of barley  
(depending on your preference for more or less barley)

1 litre vegetable stock

5-8cm rind of Parmegiano or pecorino cheese

2-3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 bay leaves

Large handful of fresh basil leaves, roughly chopped

Seasoning to taste

Water as needed

### To serve

Grainy baguette or roll

Olive oil for brushing

1 peeled garlic clove

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### Nutritional information

This soup is a great example of the Mediterranean diet, which is associated with a reduced risk of developing cardiovascular disease (CVD), as it includes olive oil, vegetables, legumes, garlic, onion, tomato and culinary herbs.

Minestrone is a thick vegetable soup, originating from Italy. Onion, carrots and celery serve as the base of most minestrone soups. Traditional recipes usually use pasta, but in this recipe I have replaced pasta with a wholegrain: barley.

Regular consumption of wholegrains, such as barley, is associated with a reduced risk of CVD. Barley contains beta-glucan ( $\beta$ -glucan), a soluble fibre recognised for its cholesterol-lowering properties. Eating dietary fibre is associated with not only reducing cholesterol, but also lowering blood pressure, improving blood glucose control and enabling weight loss, which all contribute to a reduced risk of developing CVD.

This recipe also uses soybeans as the legume, compared to traditional recipes which may use other legumes. Legumes are recommended as part of a cardioprotective diet (some sources advise 3 serves per week), as they help to improve weight management and glycaemic control and improve blood fats. The cholesterol-lowering effect of soy beans is well known, and associated with a lowering of the LDL-cholesterol (the so-called bad cholesterol). There is growing evidence as to how soy may reduce CVD in other ways, including the effect on blood pressure, glycaemic control, appetite control and inflammation. Soy beans also have a lovely nutty taste.

This recipe is ideal to cook when you have a few hours at home while it simmers away, and makes a large pot which is ideal for leftovers or freezing. It is an excellent source of vegetable protein (the legume and grain combination of soybeans and barley make a complete protein), and packed with vegetables for a healthy, hearty soup.

