



Chicken Minestrone

Literally meaning ‘big soup’, minestrone is a hearty Italian dish half way between a soup and a stew. Vegetable-based, it was traditionally made from leftovers and whatever was in the garden or foraged nearby, so feel free to use this recipe as a guide for your own improvisations. Beans or pasta, often both, add substance and make it more filling; small pasta shapes are best, but you can use bits and pieces of leftover or broken pasta.

Serves 4



INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup extra virgin olive oil (125ml)
- 1 red onion, finely diced
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 2 leeks, washed and finely sliced
- 2 litres chicken stock or water (4¼ US pints)
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 stalk celery, finely diced
- 250g ditali or other small pasta shapes (9oz)
- ¼ Chinese cabbage, finely sliced
- 350g chicken thigh fillets, thinly sliced (12½oz)
- 400g canned borlotti beans, drained, rinsed and partly crushed (14oz)
- Handful flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped

METHOD

1. Place oil and onion in a large saucepan.
2. Add a good pinch of salt, cover and cook over medium heat for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until just starting to colour.
3. Stir in leeks, cover and cook for about 10 minutes, until very soft.
4. Add chicken stock or water and bring to the boil.
5. Stir in carrot, celery and pasta and return to the boil.
6. Reduce heat to medium, cover and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
7. Stir in cabbage, chicken and beans, cover and cook for a further minute, then remove from heat, cover and set aside for at least 10 minutes.
8. Taste, stir in parsley and salt, reheat if necessary and serve.