

Ingredients:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 lg clove of garlic, minced
- 1 can tomato paste
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 4 cups dark vegetable broth (I use Better Than Bouillon vegetable or vegetarian no-beef)
- 1 large carrot, chopped
- 1 cup cauliflower, chopped
- 1/2 cup green beans, chopped
- 1 can red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 cups boiled water
- 1 cup dry macaroni
- Freshly grated parmesan, to taste (optional)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste (optional)

Directions

In a large pot, warm the olive oil and then add garlic. Sautee on low heat until fragrant.

Add the tomato paste, dried oregano, and thyme, stirring well.

Once well mixed, add the vegetable broth, chopped veggies, and kidney beans. Stir well, then cover and bring to a boil.

Reduce heat to simmer, and add the bay leaves. Simmer for 10-15 minutes.

Add two cups boiled water and macaroni noodles, then cook uncovered for another 10 minutes (or until pasta is cooked) stirring occasionally.

Ladle into bowls and sprinkle generously with parmesan (if using) and black pepper (if using).

Notes:

Chopped veggies can be fresh or frozen, or a mix. Feel free too to swap any of the veggies listed above for broccoli, celery, peas, etc.

I started using tomato paste instead of diced tomatoes because my kids won't tolerate the mouth feel of chunky tomato. BUT I find the tomato paste also gives the broth a depth and richness often missing from minestrone recipes that use diced tomatoes instead.

I haven't tried this exact recipe with a "light" vegetable broth but, similar to the tomato paste, I like the richness and depth of a darker broth for minestrone.