



## MINISTRONE SOUP

### Ingredients

- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 courgette, finely chopped
- 70g diced smoked bacon
- 3 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 x 400g can cannellini beans
- 1 x 400g can chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato purée
- 1.2 litre vegetable stock (3 stock cubes)
- 1 bay leaf
- 70g small pasta
- 100g greens - kale, chard or savoy  
cabbage works well
- handful of fresh basil
- finely grated parmesan

### Method

Minestrone soup originates in Sardinia and is one of Italy's most popular recipes. It varies from region to region, if not even from family to family. This is an easy to make, tasty, hearty soup. Full of goodness and an ideal introduction to your Mediterranean diet!

Swap out ingredients to either suit your taste, or to whatever you have to hand. I sometimes use beef, or chicken stock and swap the cannellini beans with chickpeas or the courgette with a potato. Experiment :o)

The trick here is to not overcook the pasta or it goes too soft and mushy, so leave until the end, or you can add it pre-cooked. Use a small pasta like clam shell, or small macaroni.

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a low-medium heat and gently fry the onion, celery, carrot, courgette and bacon for 10 mins. Add the garlic and oregano, and cook for another min. Add the beans, chopped tomatoes, the tomato purée, stock and bay leaf. Season to taste. Bring to the simmer and cook for 30 mins.
2. Add the pasta and greens, and cook for a further 10 mins until the pasta is just cooked.
3. Ladle into bowls and scatter with the basil and some parmesan.
4. Pass the crusty bread...