

The Best Minestrone Soup Recipe



This thick, hearty, melt-in-the-mouth Minestrone Soup is the ultimate “comfort food” for any time of the year. It is made with seasonal veggies, legumes and small pasta shape or rice.

The beauty of this soup is that you can make it a hundred times and have it taste different every time you make it. For this reason there’s no set recipe for Minestrone soup but rather some basic

concepts of choosing and cooking veggies, legumes and pasta.

Depending on the season, your local farm's market availability and your personal taste preferences your vegetable selection will be different almost each time you make minestrone.

But regardless of this here are some of the key step and ingredients you don't want to miss.

Ingredients

Base Vegetables

- Onions - you can use shallots or leek as an alternative.
- Carrots - just regular carrots.
- Celery - and regular celery.
- Garlic (optional) - I like to add whole piece crushed with flat knife to let it release flavor but not overpowering with a strong garlic taste if you mince it.
- Pancetta (optional) - since minestrone is a vegetable soup it's a perfect meal for lent. So pancetta, guanciale or lard cut in cubes is completely optional, but it gives an incredible rich, intense flavor to the veggies as if they were cooked in meat stock (which by the way is also an option).

This base mix is nothing else than a slightly extended version of classic Italian Soffritto, which is also the base for many other traditional Italian dishes.

The only difference, which is influenced a lot by a personal preference, is that when making Minestrone Soup I like a slightly chunkier cut as opposed to fine dice soffritto cut in all other recipes.

Hard Vegetables

- Potato - is always in season

- Tomatoes - any kind of tomatoes will do. You can also use good quality canned tomatoes.
- Pumpkin or Butternut Squash - available during cold season
- Broccoli or Cauliflower - available during cold season. I suggest to use cruciferous veggies in moderation due to their strong taste. Just a couple of florets will do for a pot for 4 servings.
- Artichokes - winter/spring time
- Zucchini - spring/summer time
- Green Beans - spring/summer time
- Bell pepper- spring/summer time. Like to broccoli and cauliflower, use in moderation to not overpower other vegetables.
- Asparagus - spring time
- Peas - you'd normally use frozen peas so you can use them all year round but you can totally use fresh peas during spring/summer time.

Leafy Vegetables

Anything goes that you can find fresh. Frozen would be your last choice but still possible.

Savoy cabbage, chard, chicory, spinach, escarole, kale just to name a few.

Legumes

Beans - Borlotti beans or cranberry beans are most common to be used in minestrone. But they can be easily substituted with kidney beans, navy beans, more delicate canellini beans or fava beans. Use canned beans or dried re-hydrated beans.

Chickpeas - canned or dried re-hydrated garbanzo beans.

Pasta/ Rice/ Grains

Pasta is the last thing you add to minestrone soup. Also, if you're not going to consume all the soup in one go, I highly recommend cooking some pasta in a separate pot and adding it just to the part you're going to consume immediately. Otherwise pasta will make minestrone way too mushy.

Same applies for rice and other grains like farro, barley (orzo) etc.

Water / Broth

Last but not least, you'll need water where vegetables and all other ingredients will cook. It's best to use bottle water. But if you really want to take your Minestrone Soup to the next level - **use homemade meat broth**. It's super simple to make! Don't forget to prepare a big batch and store some in the freezer.

How To Make - Step By Step

- In a large pot add a generous drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, roughly chopped onion, carrots, celery, garlic clove, and pancetta cubes. Saute on medium heat for a few minutes stirring a couple of times in the process.



- Add potatoes, butternut squash, tomatoes, bay leaf, rosemary sprigs and a couple of pinches of salt.
- Give a nice stir and add enough water (or broth) to cover all the veggies.



- Bring to a boil and simmer on low heat for about 40 minutes. Add more liquid if needed.
- Past this time veggies will become super soft and will “melt” one into another creating delicious creamy texture.
- Once veggies are cooked add chopped savoy cabbage or other leafy greens and drained canned beans. Add more water if needed.
- Give a nice stir and cook for another 5 minutes.
- As a last step, add pasta or rice. Let cook for 5-15 more minutes depending on how long pasta or rice will take to cook. It takes about 5-6 minutes for ditalini pasta and about 15 minutes for rice.



Pay Attention

If you're not planning to serve minestrone right away, don't add pasta or rice immediately.

Instead, boil pasta/rice in a small pot. Then bring minestrone to a boil when you're ready to serve it and add cooked pasta or rice. Simmer for 2 minutes.

Secrets To Making The Best Minestrone Soup

- **Don't skip soffritto.** Always start making minestrone with Onion, Carrot and Celery mix - known as **Soffritto**. Most soups and ragu sauces start with this veggie trio. All other flavors build up on this.

- **Use fresh vegetables whenever possible.** Even though you can use just any leftover veggies you have in the fridge, true secret to delicious Grandma minestrone soup lies in fresh veggies from Sunday farmer's market.
- **Don't add pasta/rice to the whole batch.** If you're not planning to consume all the soup in one go, cook pasta in a separate pot instead of cooking it directly in the soup pot.
Add it to your minestrone (just to the part you're going to consume immediately) before serving. Otherwise pasta will become overcooked and make minestrone too mushy.
Same applies for rice and other grains like farro, barley (orzo) etc.
- **Parmesan rind.** Once all the hard veggies and water or broth are in the pot, add a piece of Parmesan cheese rind. Yes, just the rind. It's a game changer. And most well kept secret (just kidding). Seriously though, it burst the flavor of veggies and broth 10x. Simmer the veggies with Parmesan rind and finish cooking Minestrone as normally. Take out the rind before serving.



How To Store

Store Minestrone in the fridge for up 3 days. If you know in advance you'll have leftovers it's best not to add pasta/rice. Instead, cook pasta/rice separately. When ready to serve, bring minestrone to a boil, add cooked pasta or rice and simmer for 2 minutes. Serve hot with freshly grated Parmesan cheese.

from: [Italian recipe book](#)