

'MINESTRONE SOUP

Serves 6

Today we take an artistic, culinary, and decorative exploration of Italy's history thanks to *Madonna and Child and Two Angels, with Twelve Scenes from the Passion* Painter painting in our Italian Gallery. The object depicts twelve scenes from the Passion, including the Last Supper. In 15th-century Italy, the subject of the Last Supper was a popular choice for the refectory walls of monasteries and convents. We imagine the nuns and monks would have enjoyed their meals in the presence of Jesus' final repast, including the time-honored Italian classic, Minestrone Soup. Some would say the dish itself seems only befitting the object, simple but layered with ingredients, as vibrant as the figures painted by an unknown artist. A classic Italian composition layered in history.

RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

1/3 cup diced pancetta or bacon	2 x 4-inch parmesan cheese rinds
1 cup diced yellow onion	1 teaspoon dried oregano
2/3 cup diced celery	1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
2/3 cup diced carrot	2 bay leaves
1 tablespoon of olive oil	1 teaspoon sea salt
2 garlic cloves, finely minced	1/2 teaspoon cracked pepper
1 medium russet potato, diced	1 2/3 cup diced zucchini
28 oz can diced tomatoes	3/4 cup cannellini beans, drained
1 1/2 Tablespoons tomato paste	1 1/2 cups ditalini pasta, cooked
6 1/2 cups chicken stock	Juice of 1/2 lemon

DIRECTIONS

Cut all vegetables into similar sized 1/2 cubes and set aside.

In a large stockpot over medium heat, cook pancetta until browned and crispy. Remove pancetta lardons and set aside.

Stir onions, celery, and carrots into the stockpot and cook for 5 minutes. Add olive oil as needed to keep the vegetables from sticking to the pan. Turn heat to low, add garlic and cook for one minute, stirring constantly.

Stir potatoes, tomatoes, tomato paste, chicken stock, parmesan rinds, herbs, salt and pepper into the stock pot and simmer over low heat for 35 minutes. Add zucchini to the soup and cook an additional 10 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

While soup is finishing cooking, cook the pasta according to the pasta directions.

Remove parmesan rinds and bay leaves from the soup and stir in cooked pasta and lemon juice. Season to taste.
Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with freshly grated parmesan cheese.