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**Minestrone Soup**

**Ingredients – serves 4-6**

3 large carrots, cut into small pieces about ½ cm

1 large onion, finely chopped

4 celery sticks cut into thin slices

1-2 tbsp olive oil (or a neutral oil such as sunflower or rapeseed)

3 garlic cloves, crushed

Handful of green beans finely chopped, or peas or courgette

2 large potatoes, cut into small dice

2 tbsp tomato purée

2l vegetable stock

400g can chopped tomatoes

2 bay leaves

½ tsp dried oregano or thyme

140g spaghetti, snapped into short lengths or any other pasta

400g can butterbeans, cannellini beans or chickpeas

Salt & Pepper

Grated cheese and fresh parsley to serve (preferably Parmesan or Gran Padano)

**Method**

Heat the oil in a large saucepan, fry the onion first. When it starts to go translucent add the carrot and celery. Once they start to soften add the garlic, potatoes and beans. Cook for a few minutes then add the tomato puree, canned tomatoes and stock (make sure the stock is hot or warm when you add it). Add the bay leaf and dried herbs. Bring to a gentle boil and add the pasta. Cover and simmer gently with the lid on.

Cook for about 10 minutes – and check to see if potatoes are soft to touch with a knife (should be about 10-12 minutes) add the butterbeans, cannellini beans or chickpeas. Cook for a further 5 minutes , taste and adjust seasoning .

Serve with crusty bread and garnish with some grated cheese and fresh parsley. The flavour will improve over a few days so leave in the fridge if not using all at once. Also this soup freezes well and will last a few months I the freezer.