



Minestrone Soup Mix

Makes enough mix for 2 to 2½ quarts of soup (8 to 10 generous servings)

- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon good-quality beef bouillon granules (may substitute vegetable bouillon granules)
- 3 tablespoons minced dried onions
- 3 tablespoons coarsely chopped dry-packed (not oil-packed) sun-dried tomatoes (or dried vegetable flakes).
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried marjoram or thyme leaves
- ½ teaspoon dried minced garlic (may substitute garlic powder; do not use garlic salt)
- Scant ¼teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (or ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons dried celery
- ¼ cup uncooked pearl barley
- ¼ cup dried red or brown lentils
- ¼ cup dried green or yellow split peas
- ¼ cup dried kidney beans
- ¼ cup dried light colored beans
- ½ cup dried medium-size pasta

Ingredients to add to prepared soup:

1 lb. browned hamburger or sausage
1 (15-oz) can crushed tomatoes
1-2 cups vegetables, frozen or canned

Directions:

Combine the dry spices, barley, lentils and split peas and put in plastic bag. Then layer the beans into clean, glass jar: kidney beans and white beans.

Pack the pasta separately in a small, sturdy plastic bag and tuck it into the top of the jar along with the spice mixture bag. Close tightly. The soup mix can be stored at room temperature for up to 2 months.



To prepare soup:

Remove the pasta & spice packet from the jar and set aside. Soak kidney beans and white beans over night or do a quick soak by boiling them in water for 2 minutes. Remove from heat, cover, and soak 1 hour. Drain water after either method.

Combine the soaked beans and spice mixture with 9 cups of hot water in a large pot over medium-high heat. Bring to a boil then reduce the heat to medium. Cover and cook for 50 to 55 minutes, until the beans are tender. Adjust the heat as needed so the soup is barely bubbling. Add 1 can (15 oz.) whole or crushed tomatoes (do not add before beans are tender or it may make the beans tougher and take longer to cook). If the soup is too thick, add more water or tomato juice to achieve the desired consistency, then increase the temperature to medium-high to bring it to a boil.

Add 1 lb. of browned hamburger or sausage and any combination of vegetables. (Suggestions: 1 cup of green beans, 1/2-1 cup cooked carrots, etc.) Add the pasta from the packet. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 to 15 minutes, until the pasta is *al dente* (barely tender). Add salt and pepper or other seasonings to taste.

Ladle portions into individual soup bowls and garnish with grated Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Cover and refrigerate the cooked soup for 3 to 4 days. The soup usually thickens upon refrigeration; thin it with water before reheating. The cooked soup can be frozen in an airtight container for up to 2 months.

Crock Pot Directions: To adjust recipe for the slow cooker, estimate 3 to 4 hours on low for every hour of conventional cooking. Estimate about 2 to 2 ½ hours on high for each hour.

(Adapted from: *All American Cookbook* Author, Nancy Baggett. Find her original recipe at <http://www.kitchenlane.com/>)