

Greens and Beans Soup (basically Minestrone) for 20

I made vegetable stock (you could buy it but it's very easy to make) about 6-7 cups.

Saute until soft, a lot of chopped celery, onions, peppers (optional) and rounds of carrots (and garlic) in olive oil or mixture of olive and canola. Throw in a mixture of greens – almost anything is fine. You can chop them up yourself or, much better yet, buy a mix. I used the package mix from Costco (the one with cabbage, brussels sprouts, kale, etc. – and packages of dressing and a cranberry mix which you obviously do not use!) I used practically the entire package. You let it cook down, mixing while it does so. Then you throw in the vegetable broth and let it simmer (perhaps partially covered) until the vegetables are cooked (I have no idea how long – maybe 30 minutes or more since it's best to cook them for a longer time). Next, add canned tomatoes. In this case I added the chopped tomatoes (entire huge can) from Costco. (The soup should freeze well so making a huge batch isn't a bad idea.) I also added basil – frozen cubes from Trader Joe's – and I added pepper and salt to taste. I threw in some canned corn and cooked white beans. Late in the cooking, I added some cooked pasta (macaroni or similar.) The pasta does become a little overcooked and probably doesn't freeze well. The soup should be very thick – you can add water or broth to thin. You can substitute or add various vegetables (beans, for instance) and grains are great in the soup. There's a mixture of grains at Trader Joe's that I intended to add but the soup was so thick that I didn't. This soup is very forgiving!

Soup is best with a drizzle of olive oil and freshly-grated Parmesan.