

News & Events



Supporting Healthy Immunity

Nourishing Vegetable Soup with Pesto

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Lauren Burns / 10/08/2020 / Blog, Nutrition

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Nourishing Vegetable Soup with Pesto

A wonderful, tasty and immune boosting soup, perfect for these cold winter days.

One of the best way we can support our immune system is by supporting our digestive system. Our gut is integrally linked to our immune function and is supported by a diet containing a variety of different coloured vegetables. Cruciferous vegies like cauliflower, broccoli and kale are especially good, along with good protein sources such as beans, legumes, eggs and meat.

This soup lends itself to lots of variations, depending on what you have on hand. You can also pimp it with whatever you think might increase compliance! For example, when my kids were little I used to add some pasta, and they would gobble it up happily. You could serve it with cheese on toast or add some tortellini. We have been making a lot of sourdough bread in our house at the moment so I have use some leftovers to make garlic croutons. I don't usually add sweet potato and green beans but they have been abundant in our weekly vegie box delivery so I've added them in too!

A note on garlic... To get the antimicrobial and immune boosting effects of garlic, it needs to be raw. The garlic needs to be crushed or macerated and left to sit for 5-10 minutes to release the anti-microbial compounds alliin and ajoene. I use garlic in cooking a lot, it is in this soup for example but more for flavour. There are many ways to include raw garlic into a meal, such as salad dressings, homemade dips and of course; pesto.

I have prepared a pesto to accompany this soup. My kids love to add it just before eating. Here I have made a Parsley Pesto. Parsley is high in vitamin C which is one of the big guns in helping to maintain the body's defence against infections.

Pesto contains a great source of good fats such as olive oil and nuts. I have used a combination of walnuts and cashews but really you can use any. Pine nuts are traditional but macadamia and almonds are also delicious. You can omit nuts altogether, or use seeds such as pumpkin seeds.

Nourishing Vegetable Soup

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced
- 1 small or ½ large carrot, diced
- 1 stick celery, diced plus a few celery leaves, chopped
- 1 small zucchini, diced
- 1 small or ½ a sweet potato, diced
- Small handful of green beans chopped
- ¼ cup pearl barley
- ¼ cup puy lentils
- 1-2 cloves garlic, bashed and chopped
- 1 tablespoon of tomato paste / Or about ½ cup of passata
- 1.75 litres stock (made from 1.75 litres water + 2 tablespoons bouillon vegetable stock powder or 2x stock cubes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat and add the onion. Sauté for a few minutes until the onion is translucent. Add the veggies, barley, lentils and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, stirring. Add the tomato. Cook for another 5 minutes, then add the stock and bay leaf and bring to the boil over a medium-high heat. Add the tomato paste. Reduce the heat to medium and cook uncovered for 30-45 minutes, until barley and lentils are cooked, stirring occasionally. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Variations:

- Add a handful of flat-leaf parsley (roughly chopped), towards the end of cooking.
- Add more or less water depending on how thick you like it.

Pesto

Makes 600ml

This is my classic pesto recipe. I use basil and parsley interchangeably, depending on what is in season or growing in the garden. This recipe contains butter, which gives a richness of flavour but for a dairy-free version simply leave the butter out. Pesto freezes well, so I often make large quantities and store a few jars in the freezer.

Ingredients

- 2 generous tablespoons pine nuts (or other nuts such as walnuts, cashews or macadamia)
- Optional
- 2 cups fresh basil or parsley leaves, washed and dried
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 125ml good-quality olive oil
- 60g butter at room temperature
- ½ cup coarsely grated parmesan

Dry-roast the nuts in a frying pan on low heat, until just golden brown. Cool. Using a food processor or blender, finely chop the basil. Add the garlic, salt, olive oil and butter and blend well. Add the parmesan and pine nuts and blend roughly. Use immediately or store in an airtight container in the fridge or freezer.

Lauren Burns is the Niño ELA Nutritional Ambassador, an Olympic gold medallist and a leading nutritionist who shares our passion for building healthy eating habits for life.

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