

Hearty Vegetable soup with Garlic and Herb Croutons



Ingredients

Choose organic ingredients when possible.

- 2-3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 carrots, quartered, then sliced
- 2 ribs celery, sliced
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 2 cups seasonal veggies of choice: green beans, potatoes, bell pepper, butternut squash zucchini, etc. (In this pic, I used green beans and potatoes because it's what I had in the house)
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 tsp curry powder
- 1/2 tsp sea salt or more to taste
- 2-14.5 oz cans of diced tomatoes, with juice (I like Muir Glen Organic)
- 4 cups vegetable broth (I made my own. Keep in mind that different brands will have different flavors and sodium levels)
- 2 cups water
- 2 bay leaves
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 cups chopped fresh greens (spinach, kale, chard, etc)
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp fresh parsley, minced
- 2 tsp fresh dill, chopped

*Optional for flavor and thickening:

- 2 Tbsp prepared hummus
- 1 Tbsp prepared harissa
- 1/4 cup quinoa flakes



For the croutons:

- 4 slices of gluten-free bread (I like Sami's Bakery Sourdough)
- 2 Tbsp EVOO- A few shakes of garlic powder
- 1 tsp minced parsley or 1/2 tsp parsley flakes

Directions

In a large soup pot, heat oil on medium. Add onions, carrot and celery and stir to coat. Cook, stirring periodically until onions are translucent, roughly 6-8 minutes.

Add the seasonal vegetables you'll be using, plus the garlic, curry powder and 1/2 tsp of the salt. Combine well and let cook for a few minutes so the garlic and curry to become fragrant, before adding the tomatoes, vegetable broth, water, bay leaves and fresh-cracked pepper.

Allow soup to come to a boil. Then, reduce to a simmer, partially cover and cook for an additional 30-45 minutes, depending on the vegetable consistency you're after. (I prefer crisp-tender).

Add your greens, lemon juice, and fresh herbs. If using, you can also add prepared or homemade hummus and harissa here. I was looking for a thicker soup, so I also added quinoa flakes as well. You can also try quick-cooking oats, if you like. It'll be delicious but you'll get a bit more texture with them.

Adjust your seasonings. Any prepared sauces/spreads will add their own salt, so this is a good time to see if the salt is adequate. If you opted not to use harissa, but you'd like some spice, you can add a few pinches of red pepper flakes.

For the croutons:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In the meantime, cut 4 slices of your favorite bread in 3/4" cubes. Combine oil, garlic, salt and parsley flakes in a bowl. Add bread cubes and toss to coat. Put on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for 6-7 minutes. Remove baking sheet, toss croutons and return to oven for another 5-10 minutes, depending on your bread. Keep an eye on them. You want them to be well toasted so they'll withstand the moisture of the soup.

When the croutons are ready, bowl up your soup, topping each serving with a handful croutons. If desired, top with some freshly-grated or non-dairy parm. Enjoy this single-pot meal. It's filled with tons of fiber and nutrients and it feels like a treat!

Adapted from *CookieandKate.com's Seriously Good Vegetable Soup*.