

Minestrone

Serves 6 to 8

FOR THE SOUP:

1 oz. dried porcini

1/4 lb. swiss chard, washed and trimmed

1/4 lb. spinach, washed and trimmed

Salt

2 small zucchini, diced

2 medium white potatoes, peeled and diced

2 Japanese eggplants, peeled and diced

2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil

2 cups tubetti pasta .

2 cups cooked white beans

Freshly ground black pepper

FOR THE PESTO:

2 tbsp. pine nuts

2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

1/2 tsp. salt

2 cups packed fresh basil leaves

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

3 tbsp. grated parmigiano reggiano

- 1. For the soup: Soak porcini in 2 cups warm water in a bowl until soft, about 20 minutes. Remove porcini, rinse, chop, and set aside. Strain porcini water through a coffee filter and reserve. Chop chard and spinach.**
 - 2. Bring porcini water and 6 cups salted water to a boil in a large pot. Add porcini, chard, spinach, zucchini, potatoes, eggplant, and oil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 1 hour.**
 - 3. For the pesto: Put pine nuts, garlic, and salt into a food processor and blend to a paste. Add basil, drizzle in olive oil, and process until smooth. Transfer to a bowl and stir in parmigiano.**
 - 4. Add pasta to soup. Cook pasta for about 10 minutes, then add beans and cook for 5 minutes more. Stir 2-3 tbsp. of the pesto into the soup; serve the rest at the table or reserve for another use. Season soup with salt and pepper.**
- Serve hot or at room temperature, sprinkled with additional grated parmigiano, if you like.**