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VEGAN VEGETABLE SOUP (Melanie McDonald)

Vegan Vegetable Soup. Because everyone needs a great tasting, basic, budget-friendly, quick, clean-out the fridge-type soup recipe to turn to from time to time.

1 tablespoon olive oil, use water for oil-free
2 medium onions, diced
3 medium carrots, diced
2 sticks celery, diced
5 cloves garlic, minced
4 to 5 medium potatoes, cubed
5 cups (1200 ml) vegetable stock
1 tablespoon Italian seasoning, or Herbes de Provence (or similar mixed herb blend)
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
¾ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
Juice of 1 small lemon or 1 tbsp of apple cider vinegar
Up to 3 cups seasonal vegetables, chopped greens, canned or frozen vegetables (optional)

- Instructions:

To a large soup pot add the oil or water. Heat over medium heat, then add the onion, carrots, and celery. Cook for about 6 minutes until fragrant and the onion is translucent.

Add the garlic and cook for one more minute then add everything else *except* the lemon juice. If using optional seasonal veggies, only add them now if they are sturdier vegetables that need a lot of cooking like squash and sweet potato. Leave canned, frozen, and more delicate vegetables like peas, greens, corn, and asparagus until near the end.

Give it a good stir and bring it to a simmer. Keep simmering gently for about 20 to 25 minutes until the potato and carrots are tender. The time will vary slightly depending on how large/small the vegetable pieces are cut.

Turn off the heat and with an immersion blender straight in the pot, give it 3 or 4 short blasts to partially blend and thicken the soup. If you don't have an immersion blender, scoop out 2 or 3 cups and blend in a regular blender then add back to the pot. If you prefer a brothier soup, skip this part.

Squeeze in the lemon juice, give it a good stir and serve immediately.

