

Cooking With Rania – Winter One-Pot Meals

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Vegetable Soup with Pasta and Pesto

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 leeks, white parts plus an inch of green, chopped and rinsed
- Pinch of saffron threads
- 3 medium to large carrots, diced
- 3 yellow waxy boiling potatoes, chopped
- 3 medium turnips, peeled and diced
- 3 zucchini, sliced into 1/2-inch rounds or chunks
- 3/4 pound green beans, tipped, tailed, and cut into 1-inch lengths
- 2 large ripe tomatoes, any color, peeled, seeded, and diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Sea salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 quarts vegetable stock
- 1 cup dried pasta: pastini, orzo, or other small shapes

DIRECTIONS

Warm the oil in a wide soup pot over medium heat. Add the leeks and saffron and cook gently until the leeks look glossy and translucent and the saffron begins to release its aroma, about 10 minutes. Add the vegetables, including the juice from the tomatoes, the garlic, and salt to taste. Cook for 5 minutes more, then add the stock. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, 20 to 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the pasta in salted boiling water, then drain and rinse under cold water to stop the cooking.

Add the pasta to the hot soup, then ladle the soup into bowls and stir a spoonful of pesto into each serving. Season with pepper to taste.

Makes about 10 cups

Pesto

- 3 cups packed fresh basil leaves
- 3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup toasted pine nuts
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 large garlic cloves

DIRECTIONS

Puree all ingredients in processor. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Can be made up to 2 days ahead. Transfer pesto to a bowl. Press plastic wrap onto surface of pesto. Cover and refrigerate.

Makes about 1 1/2 cups