



## **MEATBALL MINESTRONE SOUP**

While a more traditional minestrone soup typically doesn't have meat, the addition of beef meatballs to this soup creates a wonderfully meaty twist.

### **INGREDIENTS**

- Olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 carrots, peeled and diced
- 2 ribs celery, diced
- 1 large zucchini, diced
- 2 tsp Italian seasoning
- 1 tsp dry oregano
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- Pinch salt
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- 3 large cloves garlic, pressed through garlic press
- 1 (3 ounce) can tomato paste
- 5 C beef broth
- 1 (15 ounce) can navy beans (or other small white beans), drained and rinsed
- 1 1/2 lbs small meatballs (leftover or pre-made)
- Parmesan rind chunk (optional)
- 2 C fresh baby spinach leaves
- 1 T chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 T chopped basil
- 1 1/2 cups cooked ditalini pasta (or small elbow pasta)
- Grated parmesan, for garnish



### **INSTRUCTIONS**

1. In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, drizzle in about 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil; once the oil is hot, add in the onion, carrots, and celery, and saute those for about 3-4 minutes, or until they start to become slightly tender.
2. Add in the zucchini, along with the Italian seasoning, dry oregano, black pepper, pinch of salt, red pepper flakes, and garlic, and stir to combine.
3. Once the garlic becomes aromatic, add in the tomato paste, and cook that for about 30 seconds, just to cook out the raw flavor.
4. Next, add the meatballs, along with the white beans and the beef broth, and gently stir to combine; add in the parmesan rind chunk (if using), and cover the soup partially with a lid; bring the soup up to a rolling simmer, then reduce the heat to low and gently simmer the soup for 25 minutes, stirring occasionally.
5. After 25 minutes, turn off the heat and remove the parmesan rind, if using; add in the spinach leaves, parsley, and basil, and stir; check the seasoning to see if any additional salt/pepper if needed.
6. To serve, add some of the cooked pasta to a bowl, and ladle the soup over top; garnish with grated parmesan, if desired.

**NOTE:** If your meatballs are on the larger size, then just cut them in half or quarters before adding to the soup. They will hold up fine after you cut them.