

Refrigerator Soup

If you are cleaning out your refrigerator and have an assortment of random vegetables, this is one way to use them up and feel triumphant with the result. Before the contents become candidates for the compost bin, why not get creative and make a delicious, healthy soup?

Fresh Ingredients:

The list of ingredients below will give you some ideas, but the goal is to use up what you have on hand. Quantities aren't given, because it will depend on what you have, and what you prefer.

- Onions (White or yellow onions, leeks, green onion / scallions, or shallots all work)
- Carrots
- Celery
- Bell pepper (Red, Orange or Yellow)
- Green vegetables like green beans or asparagus
- Mushrooms (Cremini, Portobello, Shiitake, etc.) – you can also rehydrate dried mushrooms from your pantry and include them.
- Potatoes (Red, Russet, Yukon Gold, Fingerling – whatever you have)
- Parsley
- Bay Leaf



From the Pantry:

- Olive Oil
- Canned beans (Black, Garbanzo, Kidney, Pinto...)
- Dried lentils
- Canned tomatoes (stewed, whole, diced or puree all work)
- Garlic powder or fresh garlic
- Cayenne pepper or red pepper flakes
- Dried Thyme
- Kosher or sea salt & fresh ground pepper

Steps:

1. Peel and chop the onions, carrots, celery and bell pepper into ½" pieces
2. Clean and cut the mushrooms into 1/8" wide slices
3. If using larger potatoes (Russet) peel then cut into ¾" pieces. If using fingerling or other tiny potatoes, leave them un-peeled and whole.
4. Chop the parsley.
5. In a soup pot, sauté the mushrooms in a few tablespoons of olive oil until they are slightly browned.
6. Add the onions, carrots, celery and bell pepper and sauté until the onions are translucent.
7. If using canned beans, drain and rinse them before adding them to the pot.
8. If using dried lentils, rinse them first with water before adding to the pot (you don't need to soak them like other dried beans).
9. Add the canned tomatoes with the juice. If they are whole, cut them up first.
10. Add the potatoes and green vegetable and some water so that all the contents of the pot are completely submerged in liquid (you may need to add water as it cooks).
11. Season with garlic powder, Cayenne or red pepper, dried Thyme, salt & ground pepper. Season to your own preference.
12. Let simmer on low heat until the vegetables are tender.
13. Serve topped with grated cheese or a dollop of sour cream and some crusty bread.

Note: You can make this and enjoy it straight away, or store it in the fridge for a few days and the flavors will be even better. If you make a large batch, you can freeze meal-sized amounts to have for quick meals in future weeks.