

Minestrone

- 3 lbs. Sausage** (a couple links of hot sausage gives a nice kick, or half sweet half hot)
- 2 large Onions – chopped**
- 1 bulb of Garlic – minced or pressed**
- 5 (15 oz.) cans Tomatoes** (diced, crushed, sauced – any combination – more tomatoes than sauce)
- 6 medium Zucchini – sliced thin** (I use a salad shooter and shoot directly into pan)
- 1 lb. bag Carrots – sliced thin** (use a salad shooter)
- 4 cans Beans** (black, cannellini, northern, kidney...any kind will do)
- Lots of Fresh Basil** (a large bag or 3 sm. pkgs – I cut up with kitchen shears)
- 2 large cans low-salt Chicken Broth**
- Pasta – Optional** (shells, elbow, ditalini, etc. – ½ pkg. is enough)

Note: You can make it vegetarian, just skip the sausage. It's still yummy.

Cook pasta separately until al dente. If you want to throw in pasta (raw) when you add the veggies, it will all cook up nicely. Just make sure you have enough broth in there – it really thickens up – add more broth if too thick.

In a very large stock pot, sauté sausage until cooked – remove oil, and return to pan, and sauté with onion and garlic until onions are limp, but not mushy.

Stir in tomatoes, beans and basil. Add broth – start with (1) large can.

Simmer low for about an hour to meld the ingredients and develop the flavors.

Add zucchini and carrots – simmer and cook until tender. (Note: I just turn the pan off and let it cook. I like the veggies firm not mushy. Add pepper flakes or hot sauce if need a bigger kick.

Serve in a bread bowl, or in a bowl with hot bread. Either way, add good parmesan...yum!!! I make it differently every time, and it's always good.