



## Tuscan Cannellini Bean, Roasted Vegetable and Green Herb Soup

**Serves 4**

We thought it would be nice to welcome spring this year with a healthy yet hearty soup recipe. The recipe is also suitable for those who eat a vegetarian or vegan diet and whilst many of us don't, it's not a bad thing to have a break from meat once in awhile to top up our vegetable intake. Enjoy!

### TASTE OF SPRING FACT

This soup recipe draws its inspiration from rustic Italian style soups that were traditionally made with vegetables, herbs, dried beans and lentils due to meat being scarce and expensive. Whilst this recipe takes a little longer to prepare as the vegetables are roasted, it is worth the wait as the process allows the vegetables' natural sugars to caramelize which greatly enhance the soup's flavour.

The addition of the cannellini beans adds both protein and texture and when the soup is eaten with the recipe's oversized, roasted garlic croutons it makes for a simple and delicious mid or end of the day meal that is perfect to share with family and friends.

## INGREDIENTS

- 125gm Red Onion - top, tail, peel and cut into 6 wedges lengthways.
- 2 Garlic Cloves - peel.
- 225gm Red Capsicum
- - remove stem, cut in quarters, remove seeds and membrane.
- 550gm Roma Tomatoes - cut in half lengthways and remove core.
- 185gm Sweet Potato - peel and cut into a 2cm dice.
- 225gm Butternut Pumpkin - peel, remove seeds and cut into a 2cm dice.
- 185gm Carrot - top, tail, peel and cut into a 2cm dice.
- 5 sprigs Rosemary - rinse and lightly crush.
- 5 sprigs Thyme - rinse and lightly crush
- 60ml Olive Oil
- 1 Garlic Bulb (medium sized)
- 850ml Vegetable Stock
- 500ml Water
- 425gm Tinned Cannellini Beans - drain.
- 10gm Caster Sugar
- 40ml Balsamic Vinegar
- Sea Salt and Freshly Ground Black Pepper - to taste.
- 1 loaf Turkish Bread - cut 8 x 2cm thick slices diagonally across the loaf.
- Spray Oil - as required.
- Sea Salt - to taste.
- 16 Flat Leaf Parsley Leaves - rinse, drain and finely chop.

## METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to a low temperature - 120°C.
2. In a mixing bowl, add the onion, garlic cloves, capsicum, tomatoes, sweet potato, pumpkin, carrot, rosemary, thyme and olive oil. Gently toss and place into a deep sided roasting tray.
3. Place the garlic bulb onto a separate roasting tray. Prick the bulb 4 times with a fork.
4. Roast the vegetables for 45 minutes, turning them occasionally. Once cooked through, remove from the oven and discard the rosemary and thyme sprigs.
5. Roast the garlic bulb for 60 minutes or until it has softened. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Slice off ½ cm of the garlic bulb's base, squeeze out the garlic puree, mash with a fork and retain to use with the croutons.



6. Heat a saucepan over a moderate heat, add the roasted vegetables, stock and water. Bring up to the boil, then reduce the heat and gently simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from heat.
7. Carefully using a hand blender, blend the soup to a smooth puree, then pass it through a fine sieve to remove any solids.
8. Pour the soup back into the saucepan, place over a moderate heat and bring up to a gentle simmer. Add the cannellini beans and continue to cook for a further 5 minutes. Add the sugar and balsamic vinegar, mix to thoroughly combine. Season to taste. Remove the saucepan from the heat and set to one side.
9. Increase the oven temperature to 160°C.
10. Lightly spray each side of the turkish bread slices with oil, place onto a baking tray and bake for 10 minutes or until the croutons have lightly browned and are crisp.
11. Lightly spread one cut side of each crouton with the roasted garlic puree. Season to taste. Allow to cool for 5 minutes then evenly sprinkle with the parsley and set to one side.

## TO SERVE

Gently reheat the soup and pour into the required number of serving bowls, serving each with two croutons.