

Sarah's Lemony Tortellini Soup with Thyme and Spinach

Serves: 4 to 6

Ingredients:

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, medium dice (about 2 cups)
2 large carrots, peeled and cut into ¼-inch rounds (about 1½ cups)
2 celery stalks, cut into ¼-inch slices (about 1½ cups)
3 cloves garlic, minced (about 1 tablespoon)
Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
1 lemon, zested and juiced
2 quarts chicken or vegetable broth
2 sprigs fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 (9- to 12-ounce) package cheese tortellini (fresh or frozen)
3 cups fresh baby spinach
Parmesan cheese, to garnish



Directions:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery, garlic and crushed red pepper flakes. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring often, until the onion is translucent and the carrots are tender (but not mushy), about 7 to 8 minutes.
2. Add the lemon zest and cook for 1 more minute, stirring often.
3. Add the broth and thyme. Bring the soup to a boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 10 minutes. If adding any cooked meat (chicken, sausage, meatballs or ham), add it at this point so it is fully heated through before serving.
4. Remove and discard the thyme sprigs (you can strip any leaves from the stems and add them to the soup, if desired).
5. Add the tortellini and cook over medium heat for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Add the lemon juice and spinach and cook until the spinach is wilted, stirring occasionally, about 2 to 3 minutes. Serve immediately, garnished with Parmesan cheese.

Sarah's Tips:

- Instead of spinach, you can also use kale or Swiss chard.
- For a heartier soup, add cooked meat such as diced or shredded chicken, Italian sausage or meatballs.
- For leftovers: the tortellini will absorb the broth over time, so you may need to add additional stock or water when reheating.