

Italian Beef and Vegetable Soup

This is not the soup I had envisioned when I made this, but it turned out delicious nonetheless.

My original goal was a hearty cabbage filled soup, perfect for the cold winter night in which I put this together. After I had already started, I realized that I forgot I had used the cabbage I had in my fridge, and I didn't have any diced tomatoes either. Normally, I might have just turned everything off and run to the store, but it was cold and snowy, so I settled for spinach and roasted tomatoes instead.

Turns out, those were good choices, especially the roasted tomatoes. They added an amazing punch of flavor that wouldn't have come from the plain old diced variety.

The soup also got a hefty dose of Italian flavor from one of Ava Jane's Kitchen's newest seasonings — the Nana's Italian Seasoning. It's a different type of Italian seasoning that has more than just your standard herbs — it's got a nice green flavor in addition to a punch of citrus, and it's made with Colima Sea Salt, so it seasons beautifully.

This soup is perfect with a thick slab of crusty bread, and is the best meal for a cold night you'll ever have.

Note: To roast your tomatoes, chop up a few whole tomatoes or a pint of cherry tomatoes, toss them lightly with Ava Jane's Kitchen Avocado Oil and roast in a 400 degree oven for 10-15 minutes, until shriveled and lightly caramelized.

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Serves 4-6

Prep time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1 pound ground beef
- 2 tablespoons Ava Jane's Kitchen Avocado Oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon Nana's Italian Seasoning
- 1 cup roasted and chopped tomatoes (see note; or use diced tomatoes)
- 12 ounces baby spinach, chopped
- 4 cups chicken broth
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1 small bunch parsley, chopped
- Fresh ground pepper, to taste

Directions:

Cook the beef in a skillet until no longer pink in the center. Turn off heat and drain.

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large saucepan. Add the onions and carrots, and cook until softened. Add the garlic and seasonings, and cook for about a minute. Add the tomatoes and spinach, and stir and cook until spinach is wilted. Add the beef to the pot, followed by the broth and 2 cups water.

Bring to a boil, and reduce to a simmer. Simmer for about 5 minutes and stir in the lemon juice and parsley. Season with pepper, and serve hot.