

# Rustic Tuscan Bean and Veggie



Serves 4-6



This simple and satisfying Mediterranean vegetable stew can be enjoyed as a meal on its own or as a side dish to accompany grilled chicken or fish. Dress it up with pasta and cheese or read on for other customizations! Serve some warm, toasted pita or naan on the side to scoop up the delicious sauce or, better yet, whip up this quick and easy **garlic toast!**



~Preheat oven to broil.

~Spread bread (crusty French/Italian or even regular sandwich bread/ leftover burger or hotdog buns) with thin layer of butter/margarine and sprinkle with a few pinches garlic powder.

~Broil on baking sheet about 3-5 mins/until lightly browned on top.

## Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp olive/other vegetable oil/butter/margarine
- 1 small/medium zucchini (about 1/2-1 cup), fresh or frozen, sliced or diced\*
- 1 small/medium bell pepper (about 1/2-1 cup), fresh or frozen, sliced or diced\*
- 1 small/medium onion (about 1/2-1 cup), fresh or frozen, sliced or diced (or 1/4 tsp onion powder)\*
- 2-3 cloves garlic, minced (or 1/4 tsp garlic powder)\*
- 1 cup vegetable/chicken stock (if using bouillon cube, prepare according to package directions)
- 1/2 796 ml tin pasta sauce (your favourite variety)
- 1 tin (796 ml) diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 tin any type beans (or even chickpeas!), rinsed & drained
- Pinch each, salt and pepper
- Optionally**, add any of the customizations below, such as cheese and hot cooked pasta. Simply prepare pasta according to package directions and drain well. Serve rustic beans and veggies spooned on top and finish with grated/crumbled cheese of your choice!

**\*No fresh veggies?? No problem!! Check out how to make an equally delicious version using tried-and-true pantry staples!**

## Directions:

-In a deep, 12 inch skillet, heat oil over medium-low heat. Add all chopped veggies and minced garlic and sauté gently, stirring frequently, until soft (but not brown), about 10 minutes.

-Add stock, pasta sauce, diced tomatoes and beans. Stir well, increase heat to medium-high and bring to a simmer, stirring often. Once simmering, reduce heat to low and simmer gently, stirring often, until most of the liquid has evaporated, about 20-25 minutes. Serve bowls topped with desired amount of grated cheese, or use any of the other customizing ingredients listed below, if desired, such as serving over hot cooked pasta, etc.

**-Flavour tip: Make this sauté a day or two ahead, if you can, and store in the fridge - the flavours meld and develop as it sits. Reheat either in the microwave or over medium-low heat on the stove**

## Want to customize your Rustic Tuscan Bean and Veggie Sauté?...

 Add 1/2 tsp chili flakes to give this dish a bit of kick

 Use this sauté as a topper for pasta or rice

 Sprinkle with grated cheese for a mouthwatering and melty delight! Mozzarella, provolone, parmesan, feta and goat cheese are all delicious options

 Pitted Kalamata olives make an irresistibly earthy and savoury addition to this recipe! Toss in desired amount in the last 5 minutes of simmering, or, add as a garnish

 To make this already meatless meal totally vegetarian, use vegetable bouillon rather than chicken

 Serving serious meat-lovers? Add some cooked, sliced Italian sausages or meatballs during the simmer and/or garnish with crispy crumbled bacon right before serving

 Using prepared, seasoned pasta sauce in this recipe means there are already herbs and spices added. BUT... if you have any fresh herbs around, such as basil, oregano, parsley or thyme, add a few pinches of torn or chopped leaves in the last few minutes of simmering to give the dish a wonderful brightness of flavour!

 **\*To omit adding fresh veggies (zucchini, peppers, onions, garlic) simply combine 1/2 tin well-drained diced tomatoes, 1 tin chunky vegetable tomato sauce, 1 tin rinsed and well-drained beans and 1 cup chicken/vegetable broth. Simmer gently over med-low heat, stirring often, until most of the liquid has evaporated, about 20 mins. Check for seasoning and add a little salt and pepper or chili flakes if desired.**

## What's in it for me?

 Since it's full of plant-based protein and a hefty dose of vitamins and fibre, making this delicious sauté the star of 'meatless Mondays' will leave everyone's tastebuds happier and their hearts healthier!

 Cooked tomatoes provide more of the disease-fighting antioxidant, lycopene, than raw tomatoes. So, especially if paired with a green salad and some whole-grain rolls, this tomato-based sauté is a dish you can really feel good about eating!

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