Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 45 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour 5 minutes

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Ingredients

For the Base:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 3 medium carrots, peeled and diced
- 3 celery stalks, diced
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika (optional, for a subtle depth)

- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the Soup:

- 1 can (14.5 oz / 400g) diced tomatoes, with their juices
- 6 cups (1.5 liters) low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 medium potatoes (Yukon Gold or Russet), peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 cup (about 150g) green beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup (about 150g) frozen or fresh corn kernels
- 1 medium zucchini, quartered and sliced
- 1 can (15 oz / 400g) cannellini beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 cup (about 60g) fresh spinach or kale, roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (optional, to brighten the flavors)

Method: Step-by-Step Instructions

Part 1: The Flavor Foundation (The Sauté)

This initial stage is all about building a deep, savory base. The intensity is Medium-High. You want the vegetables to soften and brown slightly, not burn. This process, known as the Maillard reaction, is key to unlocking maximum flavor.

1. Prep the Aromatics: Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven or stockpot over medium-high heat. Once the oil shimmers, add the diced onion, carrots, and celery. Sauté for 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have softened and the onions are translucent. Intensity: Medium-High.

2. Add the Garlic and Spices: Reduce the heat to medium. Add the minced garlic, dried thyme, oregano, and smoked paprika (if using). Season with a generous pinch of salt and pepper. Cook for another 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the garlic is fragrant. Be careful not to let the garlic burn, as it will become bitter. Intensity: Medium.

Part 2: The Simmer (Building the Body)

This is the heart of the recipe. The intensity is Low, but the time is Long. This slow simmer allows all the flavors to meld together and the root vegetables to become tender.

1. Deglaze the Pot: Pour in the can of diced tomatoes with their juices. Scrape the bottom of the pot with a wooden spoon to lift any browned bits (the “fond”). This is pure flavor. Let the tomatoes cook for about 3-4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Intensity: Medium.

2. Add Broth and Potatoes: Pour in the vegetable broth and add the cubed potatoes. Bring the soup to a boil, then immediately reduce the heat to low. Cover the pot and let it simmer gently for 15 minutes. This will give the potatoes a head start. Intensity: Low (Gentle Simmer).

3. Add the Heartier Vegetables: Add the green beans, corn, and zucchini to the pot. Stir to combine. Continue to simmer, uncovered, for another 10-12 minutes, or until all the vegetables are fork-tender. Intensity: Low (Gentle Simmer).

Part 3: The Final Touches (Brightening and Finishing)

The final stage is about adding freshness and texture. The intensity is Low, with a quick burst of Medium for the final stir.

1. Add Beans and Greens: Stir in the rinsed cannellini beans (or chickpeas) and the chopped spinach or kale. Simmer for just 3-5 minutes more, until the greens are wilted

and the beans are heated through. Intensity: Low.

2. Taste and Adjust: This is the most important step! Remove the pot from the heat. Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning. Add more salt and pepper if needed. For a brighter, more complex flavor, stir in the fresh lemon juice and chopped parsley. This final touch lifts the entire pot. Intensity: Low.

3. Serve: Ladle the hot soup into bowls. Garnish with additional fresh parsley if desired. Serve with crusty bread for a complete meal.

Nutrition Information

This soup is as nutritious as it is delicious, packed with fiber, vitamins, and minerals from a wide variety of vegetables.

Per Serving (Based on 8 servings):

- Calories: ~180 kcal
- Protein: ~5g
- Carbohydrates: ~30g
- Dietary Fiber: ~8g
- Sugars: ~8g
- Fat: ~5g
- Saturated Fat: ~1g
- Sodium: ~450mg (can be reduced by using homemade or low-sodium broth)

- Potassium: ~700mg
- Vitamin A: 80% of the Daily Value (DV)
- Vitamin C: 35% of the DV
- Calcium: 6% of the DV
- Iron: 10% of the DV