

## Soupe au Pistou

*This is France's spring/summer equivalent of Italian Minestrone. Since the list of vegetables is long, just use what you have on hand, including a different bean and/or pasta. As summer vegetables become more prolific, you can use a variety of beans and squash.*

1 small onion, chopped

3 tablespoons olive oil

**Vegetables – pick and choose based upon your availability:**

2 leeks, white and pale-green parts only, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise, washed well, and drained

2 small celery stalks, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 medium carrot, cut into small dice

1 small zucchini, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 small yellow squash, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

2 small tomatoes, chopped or 1/2 can (15oz) diced tomatoes

3 small red bliss potatoes, cut into 1/2-inch pieces

1 C fresh or frozen green beans, cut into 1/2 inch piece

1 C fresh or frozen peas

1 can (15oz.) small white beans, such as navy, rinsed and drained

5-6 C vegetable or chicken broth

1 Parmesan rind, about 1 by 3 inches (-optional)

1/4 cup small pasta, such as elbow, small shells, ditalini or stars (-optional)

Sea salt and pepper to taste

**Pistou – if fresh herbs are not available, top the soup with a bit of fresh lemon zest**

1 C lightly packed basil leaves (can substitute parsley or cilantro)

1-2 cloves garlic

1/3 C grated parmesan

1/4 C olive oil

**Soup:** Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, leeks and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft and golden in spots, about 10 minutes.

Stir in zucchini, squash, tomatoes, potatoes, green beans, broth, and Parmesan rind. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer until vegetables are tender, about 15 minutes. Stir in beans and simmer, covered, just until warmed through, about 2 minutes. Remove rind.

**Pistou:** Pulse together the basil, garlic, Parmesan, and oil in a food processor to a loose paste. Season with sea salt and pepper.

Serve each bowl with a small dollop of pistou. Serves 6-8.