



MEDIA RELEASE
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Vegetables for a hearty winter soup

Winter is the perfect time for homemade soup with seasonal vegetables offering plenty of delicious options, says 5+ A Day.

Soup is an easy way to get more vegetables into your day while making the most of what's available now.

And it's a comforting way to warm up on a cold winter's day.

Here are five vegetables available in winter filled with good-for-you nutrients, which you can easily include in soups to help beat the chill.

Kumara

Health benefits of kumara

Three different types of kumara are widely available: red, gold and orange. Nutritionally speaking they are on equal terms, with all three varieties being a good source of fibre and a rich source of antioxidants. Red and gold kumara also contain niacin, one of the B vitamins, which helps your nervous system to function properly.

Kumara in soup

Kumara add a creamy, silky texture to soup. For a particularly delicious soup try adding warming spices such as ginger, nutmeg, allspice, cinnamon and clove.

Parsnips

Health benefits of parsnips

Parsnips contain a variety of nutrients, including niacin and potassium, which support a healthy nervous system. They are also a source of dietary fibre.

Parsnips in soup

Members of the carrot family, parsnips have a sweet, earthy flavour, making them a delicious addition to hearty winter soups, stews and roasts. Parsnip and apple is a classic soup match, while parsley, sage and thyme work well with this versatile vegetable.

Potatoes

Health benefits of potatoes

Potatoes are one of the country's most popular vegetables, with around 97 percent of us eating them at least once a week. A valuable source of vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre, potatoes contain 10 percent of the recommended dietary intake of pantothenic acid, or vitamin B5, which helps to reduce tiredness and fatigue. They are also a good source of vitamin C, which is important for your immune system and helps your body absorb iron from food.

Potatoes in soup

Potatoes help you feel full and satisfied, making them a great addition to many soups. Add them to chowders or minestrone.

Broccoli

Health benefits of broccoli

Broccoli is the star member of the brassica family of vegetables, which also includes cauliflower, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. It contains dietary fibre and is a good source of vitamin C and a source of vitamin B6 and folate. The World Cancer Research Fund has found a diet rich in brassicas may protect against cancers of the colon, rectum and thyroid.

Broccoli in soup

A vibrant green broccoli soup is packed with nutrients, perfect for lunch or as a starter. Basil, sage and thyme work well as an extra flavour to broccoli-based soups.

Leeks

Health benefits of leeks

Leeks are a good source of vitamin C, which is necessary for the structure of your blood vessels and protects cells from free radical damage. They are also a source of iron.

Leeks in soup

Leeks are relatives of garlic and onions but are sweeter and milder in flavour. To bring out the full flavour of leeks in soup, be sure to sauté them well first. Two of the world's most famous soups, Scotland's cock-a-leekie and France's crème vichyssoise, are based around them.

Broccoli, leek and spinach soup

Serves: 3 to 4

Preparation: 15 minutes

Cooking: 20 minutes

Ingredients

1 large head of broccoli, chopped into florets
1 leek, finely sliced
4 handfuls of spinach leaves
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 cups salt reduced chicken or vegetable stock
1 tablespoon olive oil
¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon pecorino cheese, grated
Black pepper
Natural yoghurt to serve (optional)

Method

Heat olive oil in a large pot over a low-medium heat then sauté the leeks for around five minutes until soft. Add the garlic and stir for one minute before adding broccoli and stock.

Simmer gently for approximately 10 minutes until the broccoli is tender, then add the spinach and simmer for a further 3 to 4 minutes.

Take off the heat and puree soup with a stick blender. Add the pecorino cheese and stir until melted. Season to taste.

Serve the soup with a sprinkle of cheese and a tablespoon of natural yoghurt. Try chopped parsley or chia seeds as a garnish

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About the 5+ A Day Charitable Trust

The 5+ A Day Charitable Trust was formed in 2007 and works for the benefit of the children of New Zealand. The Trust is committed to increasing the consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables for better health in all New Zealanders. 5+ A Day focuses its work in the education setting. Curriculum-linked resources promoting awareness, understanding and knowledge of the importance of eating 5+ A Day are produced and distributed free to educators.

Prepared on behalf of 5+ A Day by Bloom PR. For more information, interviews or images please contact Shelley Ashdown on shelley@bloompr.co.nz or 021 912 221.