

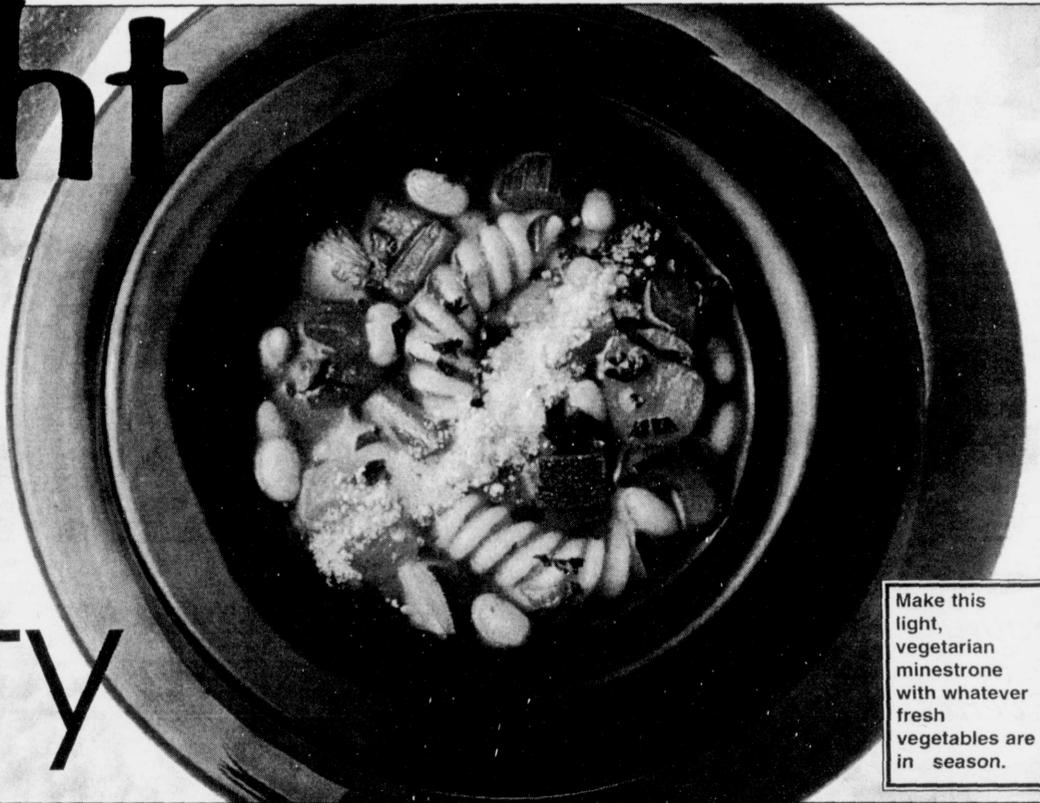
THE FREE PRESS CUISINE

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SUNDAY, JUNE 11, 2000

PHONE 564-0005

Light & Tasty



Make this light, vegetarian minestrone with whatever fresh vegetables are in season.

From orzo to udon, pasta and noodles make light, satisfying dishes well suited to summer dining. Particularly in warm weather, pasta or noodles often are easier to digest than whole grains or potatoes, and they cook quickly and readily take on the flavors of seasonings and dressings.

The dishes below taste best when made ahead, so they can be served up on short notice for a quick main course or side dish for sandwiches, burgers or barbecue.

For salads, cook pasta or noodles just to al dente stage; rinse under cold water to arrest cooking and drain thoroughly before use.

Vegetarian Minestrone

Corkscrew-shaped fusilli pasta adds eye appeal and textural interest to a summery soup.

- 2 carrots
 - 1/2 pound green beans
 - 2 zucchini
 - 8 whole plum tomatoes or 1 can (28 ounces) whole tomatoes
 - 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 onion, diced
 - 2 stalks celery, diced
 - 4 cloves garlic, diced
 - 1/2 cup parsley, minced
 - 3 tablespoons fresh oregano, minced
 - 2 bay leaves
 - 12 cups water
 - 4 teaspoons salt
 - 1 teaspoon pepper
 - 3 cups cooked, small white beans
 - 1/2 pound fusilli
 - 2 ounces grated Parmesan cheese, for garnish
1. Peel carrots and cut into 1/2-inch sections. Trim stem ends from green beans and cut into 1/2-inch lengths. Cut zucchini into 1/2-inch cubes. Core tomatoes; cut into 1/2 inch cubes.
 2. Heat oil in an 8-quart stock pot over low heat.

Cook onion, celery and garlic for 6 minutes. Add carrots, tomatoes, parsley, basil, oregano, bay leaves, the water, salt, pepper, white beans and pasta. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and simmer for 20 minutes. Add green beans and cook for 5 minutes. Add zucchini and cook for 3 minutes more. Ladle soup into serving bowl and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Noodle salad with Chicken

The dark sesame oil (made from toasted sesame seeds) and Chinese egg noodles are available in most supermarkets and at Asian markets.

- 1 pound Chinese dried egg noodles
 - 3/4 cup soy sauce
 - 3/4 defatted chicken stock or water
 - 1/2 cup coarsely chopped peanuts
 - 1/4 cup peanut butter
 - 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 - 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
 - 3 tablespoons dark sesame oil
 - 1 1/2 cups minced fresh mint
 - 1/2 cup minced cilantro
 - 2 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 cups shredded carrots
 - 4 green onions, minced
 - 1 teaspoon hot-pepper flakes
 - 4 cooked chicken breast halves, shredded
 - Cilantro sprigs, mint leaves and chopped peanuts, for garnish
1. In large pot, bring 4 quarts water to a boil. Add noodles, stir to separate and reduce heat to medium. Cook until tender but still firm (about 15 to 18 minutes). Remove from pot; rinse and drain well.
 2. To prepare dressing, combine remaining ingredients except for chicken and garnishes. Toss noodles and chicken in dressing. Garnish with cilantro, mint leaves and chopped peanuts.

Greek Orzo Salad

A salad made with orzo pasta, which resembles

grains of rice or barley, goes well with grilled lamb or fish.

- 1 cup orzo
 - 6 tablespoons olive oil
 - 5 tablespoons red wine vinegar
 - 1 small red onion, minced
 - 1 1/2 tablespoons salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 - 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 - 1/4 cup minced parsley
 - 2 large tomatoes, diced
 - 1 english cucumber, diced
 - 12 Greek olives, halved and pitted
 - 6 ounces feta cheese
1. In large saucepan, bring 2 quarts water to vigorous boil. Add orzo and cook until lightly al dente (8 to 10 minutes). Rinse, drain, and place in 2-quart serving dish; toss with 1 tablespoon of the oil.
 2. Whisk together remaining olive oil, vinegar, onion, salt, pepper, oregano and parsley. Pour over orzo; cover and chill for 2 to 24 hours.
 3. Toss remaining ingredients with orzo mixture before serving.

Chilled Udon

The noodles for this spicy salad are available in most supermarkets, in natural food stores and in Japanese markets.

- 12 ounces cooked udon noodles
 - 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
 - 5 ounces sliced water chestnuts
 - 2 cups sliced mushrooms
 - 2 tablespoons chopped peanuts (optional)
 - 1/4 cup dark sesame oil
 - 5 cloves garlic, minced, or more to taste
 - 6 green onions (including green part), minced
 - 1 to 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper, or to taste
 - 1/2 cup soy sauce
- Place udon in large bowl. Mix remaining ingredients; toss with udon. Cover and chill 30 minutes before serving.