

## Lemony Spinach Orzo Soup



Featuring leeks, bell pepper, and tiny pasta, here's a lively soup that comes together quickly. Serve with a big Greek-style salad for a light, satisfying meal.

Recipe is from *Vegan Soups and Stews for All Seasons* (5<sup>th</sup> edition) by Nava Atlas, TheVeganAtlas.com. ©2024 Amberwood Press, Inc. Distributed by Book Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission. Photos by Hannah Kaminsky, BittersweetBlog.com.

6 to 8 servings

2 medium leeks, white and palest green parts

1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil

1 medium red bell pepper, diced

2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced

6 cups water

2 vegetable bouillon cubes

14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes (try fire-roasted)

3/4 cup orzo (rice-shaped pasta)

5 ounces baby spinach

1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, or more, to taste

1/4 cup chopped fresh dill

Zest and juice of 1 lemon, or more, to taste

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Lemon slices for garnish, optional

Trim away the ends and dark green leaves of the leeks and discard. Cut the leeks in half lengthwise, then into 1/4-inch half-rings. Place in a colander and rinse very well, making sure that any grit is washed away.

Heat the oil in a soup pot. Add the leeks and sauté over medium heat until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the bell pepper and garlic and continue to sauté for 5 to 8 minutes, or until the leek turns golden and the bell pepper softens.

Add the water, bouillon cubes, and tomatoes. Bring to a slow boil, then lower the heat. Simmer gently with the cover ajar for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the orzo in a separate saucepan until *al dente*, then drain. Add the cooked orzo to the soup along with the spinach and herbs.

Stir in the lemon zest and juice. If the soup is too dense, add a small amount of water. Season with salt and pepper. Simmer over low heat until well heated through.

Serve at once, garnish each bowlful with a couple of lemon slices, if you wish.