**Recipe: The best vegetable soup ever, no kidding**

Mark Bittman, New York Times columnist and author of "The Food Matters Cookbook"

**Ingredients**

* 3/4 cup olive oil, more or less
* 2 onions, peeled and chopped
* 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
* 2 celery stalks, peeled and chopped
* Salt and freshly ground black pepper
* 1 bunch parsley, washed and chopped, thick stems discarded
* 2 or 3 cabbage leaves, chopped
* 1 bunch chard, preferably white, washed and chopped
* 1/4 cup tomato paste
* 3 to 4 cups cooked white beans, like cannelloni, with their liquid if possible

**Preparation**

Put about a third of the olive oil in the bottom of a deep pot and turn the heat to medium.

Add half the onion, carrot and celery and cook, stirring occasionally, until they soften, which takes about 10 minutes.

Add about half of the remaining oil and repeat the process, seasoning with salt and pepper as you go.

Add the remaining oil with the parsley, cabbage and chard and cook, stirring occasionally, until everything is softened but not browned.

Add the tomato paste and stir.

Mash the beans so that they're about half mashed and half more-or-less whole. Add this mixture to the pot, along with any bean cooking liquid and enough water to make the whole mixture stewy but not watery.

Continue cooking, tasting and adjusting the seasoning as necessary, until all the vegetables are very tender and the soup is hot. Serve hot or warm.

**Serving Size**

Makes about 10 servings

**Recipe: Roasted butternut chowder with apples and bacon**

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**Ingredients**

* 1 butternut squash, about 1 1/2 pounds, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes
* 1 large onion, chopped
* 2 large apples, peeled, cored and chopped
* 4 bacon slices, or one 1/2-inch-thick strip slab bacon, chopped
* 2 tablespoons minced garlic
* Salt and black pepper
* 3 tablespoons olive oil
* 1 tablespoon chopped fresh sage or 1 teaspoon dried
* 1/2 cup dry white wine or water
* 6 cups vegetable or chicken stock or water

**Preparation**

Heat the oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit.

Spread the squash, onion, apples, bacon and garlic in a deep roasting pan or on a baking sheet.

Sprinkle with salt and pepper and drizzle with the oil.

Roast, stirring every now and then, until the squash, onion and apples are tender and browned and the bacon is crisp, which takes about 45 minutes.

Remove the roasting pan from the oven.

Stir in the sage and white wine and scrape up all the browned bits from the bottom.

If you're using a roasting pan that can be used on the stovetop, position the pan over 2 burners and put both on medium heat. Otherwise, transfer the contents of the pan to a large pot or Dutch oven and set it over medium heat.

Add the stock and cook until the squash, onion and apples break apart and thicken and flavor the broth, which takes about 25 minutes. You can help the process along by breaking the mixture up a bit with a spoon.

**Serving Size**

Makes four servings