

MEXICAN MINISTRONE WITH CILANTRO PESTO

1 tablespoon olive oil	1 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped onions	2 teaspoons pure chile powder
1 cup chopped red bell pepper	2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 leeks (white and light green parts only), well rinsed and chopped, about 1 1/4 cups	3 zucchini, trimmed and sliced
1 tablespoon minced garlic	6 carrots, peeled and sliced
8 cups vegetable stock, water or chicken broth	1 1/2 cups chopped kale leaves
2 cups canned crushed tomatoes	1 cup chopped green cabbage
1 whole dried chipotle chile (or canned)	3 cups cooked pinto beans (homemade or canned, rinsed beans)
	1 cup macaroni
	Cilantro Pesto (recipe follows)

- 1 Heat the olive oil in a 5-quart soup pt over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté for 5-10 minutes, or until softened. Add the bell pepper and leeks and sauté for 5 minutes. , adding the garlic during the last 1-2 minutes so it does not brown.
- 2 Add the stock, tomatoes, chipotle, salt, chile powder and oregano; simmer for 5-10 minutes, just to blend the flavors.
- 3 Add the zucchini, carrots, kale, cabbage and beans. Simmer for 10 minutes.
- 4 Add the macaroni and simmer for 8-10 minutes, or until tender.
- 5 Put of dollop of pesto on top. YUM!

Serves 8