

20 Cloves of Garlic Borscht

Modern Jewish Cooking: Recipes & Customs for Today's Kitchen

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Yoshie and I have a bit of a borscht addiction. Our favorite version of the Eastern European beet soup is made at B&H Dairy, a hole-in-the-wall kosher restaurant that opened in New York's East Village in the 1940s, when the neighborhood was densely populated with Jewish delicatessens and Yiddish theaters. Times have changed, but B&H continues to serve up the best hot borscht I have ever eaten.

My tangy, ruby-colored version comes brimming with beets, carrots, cabbage, and potatoes. It is my ode to B&H, with a tasty twist. Following the advice of my sister-in-law, Temim Fruchter, I significantly amped up the garlic. The flavors meld together beautifully as they simmer, yielding a savory, fragrant soup.

Serves 6 to 8

Note

Peel a whole head of garlic in seconds—really! Get two metal bowls of the same size. Take a head of garlic and smash it against the counter to loosen the cloves. Place the head in one bowl and cover it with the second, inverted bowl. Shake the bowls like crazy. Uncover and your garlic will be peeled!

3 TBSP EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL OR UNSALTED BUTTER
2 YELLOW ONIONS, HALVED THROUGH THE ROOT AND THINLY SLICED
2 LARGE CARROTS, PEELED AND THINLY SLICED
1 1/2 LB/680 G BEETS, PEELED AND CUT INTO 1/2-IN/12-MM PIECES
KOSHER SALT
20 SMALL GARLIC CLOVES, FINELY CHOPPED
7 CUPS/1.7 L VEGETABLE BROTH
4 CUPS/280 G SHREDDED GREEN CABBAGE
2 MEDIUM YUKON GOLD POTATOES, PEELED AND CUT INTO 1/2-IN/12-MM CUBES
2 TBSP TOMATO PASTE
2 TBSP FRESH LEMON JUICE
1 TBSP RED WINE VINEGAR
1 TSP APPLE CIDER VINEGAR
1/2 TSP FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
CHOPPED FRESH DILL AND SOUR CREAM FOR SERVING

1. Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot set over medium heat. Add the onions, carrots, beets, and a generous pinch of salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, 10 to 15 minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 2 minutes.

2. Add the broth, cabbage, potatoes, and tomato paste. Raise the heat to medium-high and bring to a boil, then turn the heat to medium-low, partially cover the pot, and simmer until the vegetables are tender, 20 to 30 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice, red wine vinegar, and cider vinegar. Season with 2 1/2 tsp salt and the pepper. Divide the soup into bowls and top with dill and sour cream. Serve hot.