

# Vegan Borscht

So to be completely honest testing Borsch recipes was never quite on my radar, that is until I had a visitor from Kyiv. Who knew? Now I am an official Borsch fan and no doubt you will be too once you give Lena's vegan version a try.

## Ingredients

- 2 medium sized potatoes
- 1 medium-sized carrot
- 1 medium-sized onion
- 1 medium-sized beet
- 1 small sweet pepper
- 60 g cabbage
- 4 fresh tomatoes (or 3 TBL of tomato paste or 1 cup of canned diced tomatoes)
- 1 package of dried mushrooms or 3 large fresh mushrooms, diced
- 80 g cooked white beans (optional)
- 2 pitted and diced prunes
- 25 g sunflower or olive oil
- 10 g coconut oil or Earth Balance Spread (this adds a rich flavor to replace butter) paprika, black pepper, vinegar, some honey, salt to taste
- 60 g sour cream
- 1 tbsp finely chopped parsley

## Prepare

The first step is to reconstitute the dried mushrooms (if you're using them) and parboil the beet. Place a soup pot with 1.5 ltrs of water over high heat and bring just to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and add dried mushrooms. Allow to simmer 15 minutes, then add the whole peeled beet and simmer 15 minutes more. Turn off the heat and remove the vegetables from the pot of water with a slotted spoon. Set them on a

plate and allow them to cool. If you're using fresh mushrooms, just parboil the beet and move on to the next step. Leave the water in the soup pot, as you'll return the vegetable mixture to it at the end to finish cooking.

Peel and cut the potatoes into 1-inch cubes. Peel and finely dice the onion, sweet pepper and mushrooms. Grate the raw carrot and the parboiled beet. Cut cabbage into fine shreds.

Melt the coconut oil or Earth Balance Spread in a large skillet on low heat, add sunflower or olive oil to it. Add the onion, sweet pepper, cabbage and mushrooms and saute gently for a couple of minutes. Add the shredded beet, carrots and diced tomatoes and cook for a few minutes more.

Season the vegetable mixture with paprika, black pepper, a few drops of vinegar, honey, and salt, to taste. Allow to simmer for another 10 minutes over gentle heat, add the beans if desired, and diced prunes for sweetness. Turn off the heat and transfer the contents of the skillet to the water used for parboiling the beet. Bring the soup to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for a further 30 minutes.

Serve the borsch with dollops of a vegan sour cream or with a sprinkling of parsley.

*Smachnogo!*