

Parmesan-Vegetable Soup

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 carrots, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
- 2 celery ribs, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
- 2 leeks, white parts only, halved lengthwise and thinly sliced crosswise
- 1 fennel bulb—halved, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 medium tomato, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 2 bay leaves, preferably fresh
- 6 cups water
- One 3-inch square Parmigiano-Reggiano rind
- 1 tablespoon chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tablespoon chopped basil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot. Add the garlic and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add the carrots, celery, leeks and fennel and cook, stirring, until the vegetables begin to soften, about 5 minutes. Add the tomato and bay leaves and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Add the water and the cheese rind and bring to a simmer. Cover partially and cook over moderately low heat until the vegetables are very tender, about 30 minutes.

Discard the cheese rind and bay leaves. Stir in the parsley and basil and season the soup with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls, sprinkle with the grated cheese and serve.