

## Borscht

1 tablespoon oil  
½ cup each: sliced onion, diced carrot, diced rutabaga  
¼ cup finely diced celery  
½ cup shredded cabbage  
1 ½ cups diced beets, washed but not peeled  
2 ½ cups vegetable or chicken stock  
1 teaspoon salt  
Ground bay leaves  
Garlic powder  
Lemon juice, white vinegar, or apple cider vinegar

Borscht has a special place in my heart. It's sweet, acidic, hearty but light. It's full of tasty and healthy things. And it's versatile. There are meat-based versions and vegan versions. There are thick, pureed versions and ones that are just seasoned broth. They can be made acidic with vinegar or lemon juice or the juice of sauerkraut. They can be cold or hot, or room temperature. This is one I've developed according to ease and taste. I like it warm on a rainy day, and chilled for a summer lunch. Optional additions include a few healthy pinches of dill, a garnish of sour cream (I use kefir instead. Generally speaking, I will use kefir or yogurt before using sour cream), or potatoes, either diced and added into the soup, or mashed or boiled and served alongside the soup. Rutabaga isn't traditional by any means, but I think rutabaga makes just about any soup better. I also didn't technically dice my veggies. I used the shredding attachment on my mandolin. You can definitely do that, or use a food processor, or shred them on a box grater, or cut them by hand. You'll probably still have to shred the cabbage by hand, since it doesn't take too kindly to being pushed against a grater.

Heat up the oil in a large pot over medium heat, and add all the vegetables, except beets and cabbage. Sweat the veggies until they're a bit wilted. Then, add the beets, cabbage, and stock. Add the garlic powder, ground bay leaves, and a bit of salt. This is just a preliminary seasoning. When everything is done cooking, you'll taste it again and add more salt if needed, so don't feel like you have to add all the salt right now. Remember, you can always add more, but you can never take away.

Simmer the soup until the vegetables are tender. It should take about 20-25 minutes. It depends on how thick the veggies have been cut. You can cook it longer if you want the veggies softer or cook it for less time if you want them crunchier.

Now, season with something acidic. For this recipe, I used ¼ cup white vinegar, the juice of half of lemon, and about a scant ¼ cup of apple cider vinegar. But I like my soup pretty acidic. This soup is meant to be sour though, so just add as much as tastes good to you.

Serve hot, or chill and serve cold. I like a drizzle of kefir to garnish.