

Garlicky Veggie Stew with Rice

Ingredients:

Two tablespoons olive oil
One large sweet onion, diced
Three stalks celery, diced
Four medium carrots, peeled and diced
One green bell pepper, diced
One red bell pepper, diced
One large zucchini, diced
One large yellow (summer) squash, diced
One small head garlic, each clove peeled and smashed
One small can tomato paste
Two quarts of your favorite stock (chicken or vegetable)
Three sprigs fresh thyme
1/2 cup uncooked brown rice
Salt and pepper

In a large pot or dutch oven, heat the olive oil. Add the smashed garlic cloves and cook until fragrant, then remove the garlic and set it aside (you'll add it back in later). Add the onion, celery, and carrots and saute until slightly softened, about two minutes. Season with salt and pepper, then add the bell peppers. Saute another two to three minutes, then add the zucchini and squash. Stir in the can of tomato paste and saute another two to three minutes. Add the sprigs of thyme and stock (you can pluck the leaves or throw them in whole, then fish out the stems later). Stir well and bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer about twenty minutes. Meanwhile, finely dice the garlic or put it through a garlic press. When the twenty minutes is up, add the garlic (you don't have to add it all, I suppose, but you should) and the rice. Simmer for another twenty minutes, then taste for seasoning.

Serve on its own or with some nice, crusty bread to sop up the liquid.