

Fertility Friendly 'Three Bean, Tomato and Kale Meal Soup'

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Fancy making a nutritious and delicious speedy meal soup? This is a great fertility-friendly recipe that can be batch made and frozen – quick and easy for in the middle of a busy week.

This truly is a great example of a Mediterranean fertility-friendly style meal soup. The **beans** in this soup are an excellent source of protein, fibre and folate and contain natural phytoestrogens which can help to block oestrogen receptors thus helping to balance hormones.

Tomatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C – a powerful antioxidant that has many important functions in the body including, immune support, skin health, the prevention of blood clots and anti-ageing roles. But when it comes to fertility, alongside the vitamin C (which helps to protect the egg and sperm from oxidative stress caused by free radical damage) tomatoes contain Lycopene. Lycopene is a naturally occurring carotenoid. The main food source of lycopene for many is the tomato. Carotenoids are powerful antioxidants and provide red, yellow and orange colour to fruit and vegetables. They have an important role in that they protect the cells of the body from damage caused by free radicals. Cooked tomatoes have more lycopene than uncooked tomatoes.

Kale is a member of the cruciferous family and is packed full of antioxidants and nutrients. In addition to some key antioxidants such as vitamin C, beta-carotene, and manganese, kale also provides us with at least 45 different recently discovered flavonoids, including kaempferol and quercetin. Many of the flavonoids in kale are also now known to function not only as antioxidants but also as anti-inflammatory compounds. Kale contains phytonutrients (particularly rich in Lutein and zeaxanthin) which are known to promote health by enhancing the immune system, repairing damage and protecting cells, removing harmful products from the body, as well as reducing inflammation.

This makes Kale an excellent choice as part of a healthy fertility diet, especially for people suffering from Poly Cystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) or Endometriosis. Kale is also high in

beta carotene and one of the best plant sources of calcium, which is vital for fertility because calcium is involved in egg maturation and follicular growth.

Three Bean, Tomato and Kale Meal Soup

Ingredients:

1 large onion, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

1 tbsp olive oil

Pinch each of black pepper and sea salt (optional)

1 tbsp ground cumin

400g tin or fresh chopped tomatoes

200g kidney beans, rinsed and drained

200g cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

100g green beans, chopped

100g kale, washed and roughly chopped

How to make:

Cook the onion and garlic in a little olive oil until softened. Add the cumin and cook for a minute. Add in the tomatoes, along with a cup of water and simmer for 10 minutes, until thickened. Add all the beans and cook for 5 minutes. Add the kale and seasoning (optional) and cook for a further 5 minutes. Serve with a piece of gut-friendly sourdough or seeded brown bread. Double up ingredients to freeze. Enjoy!