



## **Early Spring Soupe au Pistou**

*Serves 6*

4 tablespoons olive oil  
3 medium leeks, dark green parts trimmed and discarded, light green and white parts thoroughly washed and cut into ¼" slices  
Kosher salt  
6 garlic cloves, minced  
8 cups homemade chicken stock (or water; avoid canned chicken broth)  
1 15 oz. can Roma tomatoes, drained and chopped  
1 tbsp. chopped fresh thyme  
2 tbsp. chopped fresh parsley  
1 bay leaf  
2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice  
1 medium turnip, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice  
2 stalks celery, cut into 1/2-inch dice  
1 cup cooked and drained flageolet or cannellini beans  
½ bunch of white or red Swiss chard  
½ cup Israeli couscous, acini di pepe, or orzo pasta  
About ½ cup pesto

In a large heavy pot, heat the olive oil over medium and add the leeks and a generous pinch of salt. Stir, cover the pot, and lower the heat to medium-low. Cook the leeks gently without browning, stirring occasionally, until they are limp and tender. Increase the heat to high, add the garlic, and sauté, stirring, one minute. Then add the chicken broth and bring to a simmer.

Add the tomatoes, herbs, carrots, turnips, celery and beans, and bring back to a boil. Simmer until the vegetables are just tender, about 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, cut the ribs out of the chard leaves and set aside. Cut the larger leaf pieces in half or quarters lengthwise, stack eight or ten leaves, and cut into 1/4" slivers crosswise. Make sure they're not too long – no one wants long strands of anything hanging off his soup spoon! Continue until all the chard is sliced, then add it to the soup pot. Add the pasta, stir, and simmer the mixture until the chard is tender and the pasta is cooked, about 15 minutes.

To serve, ladle the soup into bowls. Add a dollop of pesto to each bowl, swirling it in, and serve.

Serving note: crostini spread with goat cheese make a wonderful accompaniment.