

Nettle Soup with lemon and potato (with variations)

Makes around 4 servings (8 cups)

8 ounces fresh picked **nettle** shoots

1 **onion**, chopped

¼ cup **olive oil**

8 cloves **garlic**, smashed and chopped

1/2-1 t kosher **salt**

2 t fresh **rosemary**, chopped

¼ t (or more) red **chili flakes**

black pepper

1 ½ lbs **potatoes** chopped into ~1/2 inch chunks

juice of 1 large **lemon** (around ¼ cup)

Bring at least 6 cups of water to a simmer, add nettles and simmer 1 minute. Remove, drain, and let cool. Reserve 6 cups of the blanching water. Gently squeeze nettles to remove excess water (you can squeeze into the reserved nettle water). Remove large stems and chop nettles.

Heat olive oil in a large pot, saute onion and garlic until fragrant and somewhat softened (caramelization is fine). Add rosemary, salt, several grinds of black pepper, and chili. Stir. Add potatoes, stir. Add the reserved nettle blanching water and half of the lemon juice; bring to a simmer. Simmer until potatoes are tender (around 10 minutes).

Stir in the chopped nettle and remaining lemon juice.

Add more salt, lemon, black pepper, or chili to taste.

Variations:

- add 1 lb ground chicken with the spices, cook until no longer pink before adding potatoes
- substitute chicken broth for nettle blanching water (omit salt if broth is salted)
- substitute 3 cups tomato sauce and 3 cups water for nettle blanching water (omit salt), you may add cooked beans and/or pasta to make a “nettle minestrone”.
- substitute 6 cups seaweed dashi for nettle blanching water (omit salt—make dashi by heating dried konbu or alaria in water just until it boils)

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