



## A Summery Vegetarian Green Borshch from Ukraine

RECIPE AND PHOTO BY ANNA VOLOSHYNA

For my first recipe for *Edible San Francisco*, I wanted to choose a quintessential Ukrainian dish that would set the tone for my column and give a spotlight to the wonderful San Francisco summer produce. While I've been contemplating what dish to choose, the answer came with unexpected but cheerful news—the culture of Ukrainian borscht cooking was inscribed on UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. I immediately knew that I needed to write about borshch (the Ukrainian spelling).

For Ukrainians, borshch is not just a dish. It's a part of our culinary history, a true symbol of Ukrainian hospitality, and a bridge that brings a family together around the table. In Ukraine, we have a saying that every hostess has a unique borshch recipe and that no two borshches taste the same. Indeed, there are countless variations that differ from region to region and from family to family. There are borshches with white beans, porcini mushrooms, smoked pears, beet kvass, and fried fish, just to name a few. All are distinct, memorable, and always share the same pleasantly sour taste and a hearty, vivacious core of proper Ukrainian comfort food.

Meaty red or bright purple borshch is something that most people are accustomed to, but there is also another less familiar version: green borshch, made with tart sorrel, luscious spinach, and chopped hard-boiled egg. With its pale broth and vivid green and yellow inclusions, green borshch looks distinctly different. But like any other borshch, it has a signature sour note and is served with a generous dollop of sour cream and fluffy garlic bread rolls, or pampushky.

Despite always having green borshch with meat, I decided to make it vegetarian this time. I think this lighter version is better suited for summer, as it can be consumed hot or cold. It also leaves you feeling refreshed and invigorated, which is just what you want in summer. Another change I made is to add golden beets. Most of the time, we don't add beets to green borshch in Ukraine, but I felt it would be a missed opportunity. In my opinion, every borshch needs some beets, and at the end of the day, that is what makes my green borshch unique.

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### SERVES 6

- 8 cups vegetable broth
- 1 large golden beet, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 4 medium Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 small yellow bell pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- 4 tablespoons sunflower or other neutral oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into matchsticks
- 1 can (14-ounce) pinto beans
- 1 bay leaf, fresh or dried
- 6 ounces spinach, roughly chopped
- 3 ounces sorrel, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh dill and flat-leaf parsley, in equal parts
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, peeled and chopped into 1/2-inch cubes
- Sour cream, for serving

In a medium-large pot, combine vegetable broth, beet, and potato, and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Lower the heat to medium low and cook, uncovered, for about 5 minutes, skimming off any foam and impurities from the surface as they develop. Then add the bell pepper and simmer for 10 more minutes.

Meanwhile, in a medium sauté pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onion and carrot and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and translucent, about 7 minutes. Transfer the onion-carrot mixture to the soup, add the pinto bean, and bay leaf, and simmer for about 3 minutes to blend the flavors.

Stir in the spinach, then sorrel, bring to a simmer and cook until the greens are wilted, about 2 minutes. Add the chopped dill and parsley, season to taste with salt and pepper, and remove from the heat.

Ladle the soup into bowls. Garnish each serving with chopped eggs and a dollop of sour cream.