

## Chef Yan's Favorite Borscht

(September)

Serves 8 - 10

1 lb            beef shank

2 tablespoons cooking oil

1                onion, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 cloves        garlic, minced

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1                carrot, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 stalks        celery, cut into 1-inch pieces

1                red bell pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces

2 cups          coarsely sliced cabbage

2                plum tomatoes, peeled and crushed

1 medium      potato, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces

1/2              whole lemon

2                bay leaves

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper

1 teaspoon    sugar

                  Tabasco sauce (optional)

Blanch the beef shank in a pot of boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water to remove scum. Place shank in a soup pot, fill with water and bring to a boil, reduce heat and continue to simmer. Meanwhile, heat a wok over medium-high heat until hot. Add oil, swirling to coat sides. Add onion and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tomato paste and cook for 30 seconds. Add carrot, celery, bell pepper, cabbage, tomatoes and potato. Stir-fry until vegetables have wilted, about 5 minutes. Scoop all vegetables, lemon and bay leaves into soup pot with beef. Boil over medium-high heat for 20 minutes, then reduce heat and simmer until beef is tender, about 1-1/2 hours. Season with salt, pepper, sugar and Tabasco sauce. Remove lemon and bay leaves; cut beef into bite-size chunks before serving.

**\*Note:**

\* This soup is best when prepared a day in advance. Letting the flavors “marry” overnight improves the taste dramatically!

\* There is an abundance of vegetables to choose from in the fall. A good time to prepare healthy dishes.