

Kale and White Bean Soup

This is quick to make and is really good on a cold day. Eaten with a chunk of good wholegrain bread, this soup is a complete meal.

You can use any small white beans for this soup either dried or canned – just follow the note below if you use canned.

It is worth the trouble to cook your own beans if you can plan ahead. Most canned beans are high in salt, so you can control this when you cook them yourself, plus they taste so much better!! I often cook batches of beans and freeze them 2 cups at a time so they are ready to throw into a soup or salad whenever I need them.

I sometimes add a grating of fresh parmesan cheese when I check for seasoning in step 6 not to add a cheesy taste, but instead of salt to bring out the flavors of the soup.

Serves 4-6.

1-2 Tbsps olive oil

1 medium/large onion in a small dice

1 large carrot in a small dice

1 medium/large waxy potato in a small dice (Yukon Gold are perfect for this)

1 sprig of fresh rosemary, leaves stripped and chopped – 1 tsp reserved

1 clove garlic chopped

1 large bunch of kale or 2 small ones. (Collards work well too)

2 cups cooked baby lima beans + their broth or other white bean (cannellini; great Northern)

NOTE* If using canned beans, use a 1x 14oz can drained and rinsed well to remove any remaining salty cooking broth. Add them to the soup along with an extra cup of stock or water at step 5.

9 cups low salt stock, vegetable or chicken, or water.

(Remember: commercial stocks can be VERY salty!)

1 Tbsp chopped flat leaf parsley

1. Strip the leaves from the hard stems of the kale. Put them in a salad spinner and wash them. Chop them into bite sized pieces. Set aside
2. In a large soup pot or cocotte, heat the oil over a medium high flame until it starts to ripple.
3. Add the rosemary, let it sizzle for a moment then add the diced onion, carrot & potato. Stir the vegetables to coat them with oil and herbs then turn the heat down to medium low. Cover and 'sweat' the vegetables for 8-10 minutes or until they are soft and the onion is very slightly golden, stirring every so often to make sure they don't stick or burn.
4. Turn up the heat to medium high. Add the chopped garlic. Stir and cook for another 2 minutes until you start to smell its aroma. Add the greens and stir fry until they start to wilt and soften.
5. Add the stock + the beans and their liquid if home cooked. The beans and vegetables should be well covered with liquid but not 'drowned'. Add extra water if needed. Bring soup to a boil. Partially cover turn heat down to low and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring from time to time, until the greens are tender.
6. Check for seasoning then cook 5 minutes more. Mash some of the beans against the sides of the pan to thicken the soup slightly. Stir in the chopped parsley and remaining rosemary. Let the soup sit covered for 5 minutes. Serve drizzled with a little olive oil (optional).

Basic White Beans

This is a basic recipe for cooking dried white beans. Just remember dried beans will not soften if cooked in salted water. The garlic, oil and herbs will give them flavor.

DO NOT ADD ANY SALT OR COMMERCIAL STOCK PRODUCTS UNTIL THE BEANS ARE SOFT!!

1 cup dried baby lima beans (or cannellini or great northern) soaked overnight
1 small sprig of rosemary
3 cloves of garlic smashed and peeled
extra virgin olive oil
water to cover

To soak beans:

rinse the dried beans in water and put in a large bowl. Cover with at least 4 x their volume of water and leave to soak overnight.

To cook:

Drain and rinse the beans and put into a pot with a heavy lid. Cover with fresh cold water. Add the rosemary, garlic and a drizzle of olive oil. Bring the beans to a boil then cover and simmer gently for 20 - 30 minutes or until the beans are tender but not mushy.

Note:

The cooking time will depend on the size and age of the beans; smaller/newer= shorter cooking time, so check to see how they are doing after 20 minutes.
