

Salt and Serenity

White Bean and Kale Soup

Serves 4-6

Adapted from saveur.com

This soup uses dried white kidney beans, so you will need to soak them for about 8 hours before proceeding with making the soup. Once the beans are soaked, they are cooked with onions, carrots and celery, which infuses the beans with great flavour. Plus, as a bonus, you use that flavourful bean cooking liquid in the soup. If you're pressed for time, you could use canned beans, but you won't get the same depth of flavour that cooking the beans yourself develops.

I always save the rinds from my wedges of Parmesan cheese. I just throw them into a bag in the freezer to keep for soup making. They add a wonderful boost of umami to your soup.

Soup:

2 cups dried white kidney beans, soaked overnight in cold water and drained
4 medium carrots, diced into ½ inch pieces, divided in half
2 celery stalks, diced into ½ inch pieces, divided in half
1 large yellow onion, diced into ¼ inch pieces, divided in half
2 Tablespoons olive oil
2 cloves garlic, grated with microplaner or minced very fine
1 Yukon gold potato, peeled and diced into ½ inch pieces
1 sweet potato, peeled and diced into ½ inch pieces
4 large leaves of black kale (also known as Lacinato, Dinosaur or Tuscan kale), centre ribs removed and leaves sliced into thin julienne strips.
Rind of 1 wedge of Parmesan cheese
2 teaspoons kosher salt
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ - ½ teaspoon Aleppo pepper or red pepper flakes (optional)

Bread Crumb Garnish:

½ loaf sourdough or other artisan bread (about 200 grams), cut into 1-inch cubes (no need to discard crust)
3 Tablespoons olive oil
¾ teaspoon kosher salt

Other Garnishes:

¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
2 Tablespoons olive oil, for drizzling
¼ cup Italian parsley, coarsely chopped

1. Place soaked and drained beans half the carrots, half the celery and half the onions into a large saucepan. Cover with 5 cups of water. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to low. Simmer, covered, until beans are tender, 40–45 minutes. Scoop out about ¾ cup of beans and set aside. Transfer the remaining beans and their cooking liquid to a blender and purée. Set puréed beans aside.
2. Heat 2 Tablespoons olive oil in a 5-quart pot over medium heat. Add minced garlic remaining carrots, celery and onions and cook, stirring often, until soft, about 3 minutes. Add reserved bean purée, potatoes, kale, Parmesan rind and 1 cup water. Stir well to combine everything. Season with salt, black pepper, and Aleppo pepper if using. Bring to a boil, and reduce heat

to medium-low; cook, covered, until the vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Remove parmesan rind and discard.

3. While soup is cooking prepare bread crumbs. Preheat oven to 350 F. Place bread cubes in the food processor and pulse 10-15 times until you have large coarse crumbs. You don't want fine bread crumbs here. Transfer bread crumbs to a baking sheet and toss with olive oil and salt. Bake for 10-12 minutes until bread crumble is golden brown. Set aside to cool.
4. Ladle soup into bowls and garnish with grated Parmesan, chopped parsley and bread crumbs. Drizzle with olive oil.

Leftover soup will keep in the fridge for several days or it can be frozen for 2 months. Leftover crumbs can be stored in an airtight container at room temperature for several weeks.