



WHITE BEAN SOUP

- 1 lb white beans (prepped-see below)
- 1 onion (chopped medium fine)
- 2 carrots (chopped medium fine)
- 1/2 bunch celery (chopped medium fine)
- 3-4 garlic cloves (chopped very fine)
- 2-3 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf (optional)
- 4oz white wine (optional)
- 1 gallon vegetable stock



To prep the white beans:

Method 1 - soak beans covered with cool water overnight.

Method 2 - put beans in a pot, cover generously with COLD water, slowly bring to a boil. Once boiling, turn off the heat, cover tightly and wait 60 minutes. Beans can then be drained and are ready for use. Do not salt the water for this purpose. Salt will tend to toughen the exterior membrane of the beans.

To prepare the soup:

1. In a heavy bottomed 8 quart pot, sauté onions, carrots and celery over medium-high heat using a neutral cooking oil. You want to soften the vegetables until the onions are translucent. If the vegetables start picking up color, lower the heat! When almost done add the garlic and thyme.
2. [optional] Add white wine to deglaze. Let wine evaporate 50% Add bay leaf.
3. Add beans and stock. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat so that the soup is barely bubbling. Stir occasionally to make sure the soup is not sticking to the pot.
4. Cook until the beans are done. This is a matter of personal preference. When done to your satisfaction, take 50% of the soup and blend. Put the blended soup back in the pot. If you desire a thicker soup, either cook some more to evaporate the stock, or purée a bit more of the soup. If you want it thinner, add stock or water.
5. Season well. **CRITICALLY IMPORTANT!** The soup will be very bland until you add salt and pepper. You will need a surprising amount of salt, but again, this is a matter of personal taste. Add a dash of cayenne pepper for a bit of zing.
6. Serve in bowls, garnish with a swirl of olive oil and enjoy with a slice of toasted rustic bread.