

White Bean and Kale Soup

By Audrey Plant

Ingredients

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, additional for garnish
1 large onion, finely diced
5 cloves garlic, peeled and finely minced
2 cups celery, finely diced (about 4-5 stalks)
2 cups carrots, unpeeled and finely diced (about 4 large carrots)
1 teaspoon dried oregano
2 teaspoons fresh thyme, roughly chopped
1 tablespoon granulated garlic
¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 tablespoons kosher salt
3-ounces tomato paste
2 pounds mild Italian sausage in bulk, uncased
2 quarts of low-sodium chicken broth
2 cans (15-ounces each) cannellini beans, keep 1 can whole/separate (do not blend)
2 cups water
1 parmesan reggiano rind
2 bay leaves
1 bunch dino kale, stems removed and roughly chopped
grated parmesan reggiano for garinish

****Do not wash beans, keep bean liquid****

Instructions

1. Preheat a large Dutch oven on medium-high heat with extra-virgin olive oil.
2. Sauté onions for 2-3 minutes until translucent. Add garlic, celery, and carrots.
3. Stir constantly; add dried oregano, fresh thyme, granulated garlic, red pepper flakes, salt, and pepper. Add tomato paste and stir until tomato paste is evenly distributed. Stir and sweat the vegetable mixture for an additional 3 minutes on medium heat.
4. Add Italian sausage, breaking up with a spoon. Cook through till lightly browned and vegetables are tender.

5. Add chicken broth to pot, stir constantly, scraping up any bits from the bottom of the pot.
6. Using a blender, blend 1 can plus the liquid of cannellini beans and water.
7. Add blended bean and water mixture to pot. Stir in the remaining 1 can of whole cannellini beans.
8. Add parmesan reggiano rind and bay leaves and stir. Simmer on medium-low for 10-15 minutes.
9. Add roughly chopped dino kale and simmer for an additional 5 minutes. Remove from heat and garnish with grated parm and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.

Notes:

1. Substitute sausage for ground turkey or ground chicken. If meat is unseasoned, add 1 teaspoon of whole fennel seeds and additional salt and pepper to taste – as needed.
2. Blending the beans and water is crucial, this adds a nice thickening agent to the soup.
3. I keep 1 can of beans whole so that you can see that in the soup.