

Greek White Bean Soup with Feta and Dill

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Feel free to improvise here. Add chopped fresh fennel, zucchini, sweet red peppers, butternut squash, potatoes or chard.

Ingredients

- 2 cups dried white beans, chickpeas or cranberry beans
- 1 large celery rib, in 3 pieces
- 1/2 yellow onion, halved again through the root end
- 2 bay leaves
- Sea salt
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus more for garnish
- 2 cups sliced leeks, white and pale green part only
- 2 medium carrots, diced
- 2 to 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/2 to 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill, plus more for garnish
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Pickled Greek pepperoncini, sliced
- 2 ounces feta



Directions

Soak the dried beans overnight in cold water to cover generously. Drain and place in a heavy pot with 1-1/2 quarts water. Add celery, onion, bay leaves and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Cover and adjust the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Cook until the beans are tender, 1 hour or more. Check occasionally to make sure they are still submerged in liquid; add boiling water if necessary to keep them barely covered.

When the beans are done, let them cool in their liquid. Discard the celery, onion and bay leaves. Set aside 1 cup of whole beans. In a food processor or blender, puree the remaining beans with enough of the cooking liquid to achieve the texture you like. (I like my soup on the thin side.)

Warm the olive oil in a clean pot over medium heat. Add the leeks, carrots and garlic and sauté until softened, about 10 minutes. Add the bean puree and bring to a simmer. Stir in the whole beans and the dill and season with black pepper and more salt. Simmer gently until the carrots are tender, about 10 minutes.

Divide among 4 soup bowls. Top each portion with sliced pepperoncini, crumbled feta, a sprinkle of dill and a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil.

Serves 4