

Italian White Bean Soup

Swick

Serves 1 | Active Time: 40 minutes | Total Time: 11 hours

Chef's Notes

The soup base can be cooled and stored in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days; alternatively, it can be cooled and transferred to tightly-sealed containers and frozen for up to 6 months.

Other ideas for finishing the soup: chicory, escarole, Swiss chard, spinach, arugula, basil, broccoli or even sautéed fennel.

Step 1: Soaking the Beans

*Note: Any small, white, dried beans can be substituted for cannellini beans (i.e., white kidney beans, Great Northern beans or navy beans).

Before soaking the beans, first sort and rinse them to remove any dust or debris. Place the beans into a large bowl and cover with cold water plus at least 2 inches. Peel and smash the whole cloves of garlic and add to the bowl along with the bay leaf. Let soak for 8 hours or even overnight.

Step 2: Cooking the Beans

First drain and rinse the soaked beans. To cook the beans, place them into a large, heavy-bottomed pot and cover with the cold water. Add the bay leaves and extra-virgin olive oil and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring occasionally. Once the beans come to a boil, reduce the heat to a gentle simmer. Cover the pot with the lid slightly ajar and let cook for about an hour until the beans start to become tender.

After the first hour, add the salt and continue to simmer for another hour or so until the liquid has reduced to about 3 liters (or quarts). Stir the beans occasionally to prevent scorching on the bottom of the pot.

Step 3: Finishing the Soup

Once the soup has reduced to about 3 quarts and the beans are nice and tender, make the soffritto.

First, émincé the garlic. Place a small skillet on the stove top. Add the extra-virgin olive oil, garlic and chili flakes. Slowly heat the mixture over medium-low heat. Cook just until the garlic releases its aroma and just starts to turn color. Do not let it brown or burn. Add about 1 cup of the broth to the pan and let it simmer for a couple of minutes.

Pour the soffritto into the pot and stir to combine. Simmer the soup for about 5 more minutes. Season further to taste. The soup can be served as is, or it can be finished with a variety of other ingredients, such as fresh kale and plant-based sausage.

To do this, remove the tough stems from the kale and tear or cut into 1 to 2" -inch pieces. Wash and spin dry.

For the sausage, either prepare the Vegan Sausage or cut sausages of choice into bite size pieces. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. Fry the sausage until cooked through and golden on all sides. Once done, transfer the sausage to plate lined with paper towels to drain. Drain any excess oil from the pan and add the kale. Toss, season with a pinch of salt and pepper to taste and cover for about 2 minutes until it wilts and becomes tender.

To serve the soup, place a bit of kale into a warmed bowl, followed by a few pieces of sausage. Ladle the hot soup over top. Serve with some Plant-Based Parmesan and a splash of quality olive oil.

Alternate method:

To finish the soup, remove the tough stems from the kale and tear or cut into 1 to 2" -inch pieces. Wash and spin dry. Add the kale to the soup and gently simmer until softened, about 5 to 10 minutes.

If desired, drizzle with a bit of extra-virgin olive oil and serve.