

Pasta e Fagioli

Pasta e Fagioli is a well-loved bean stew from the northeast region of Italy, where Venetians adore the speckled pink and white cranberry bean, “pasta fazool” is a classic. And as is the case with many hearty dishes, this soup was born from necessity, of stretching the lira and the larder to feed hungry mouths just one more day. That’s amore.

See Cook’s Note on using dried beans instead of canned.

Ingredients

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
2 ounces pancetta, diced
1 small or 1/2 medium onion, diced (about 3/4 cup)
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ to 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, depending on how spicy you want it
4 fresh sage leaves, finely chopped (about 2 teaspoons)
1 rib celery, diced
1 carrot, diced
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 tablespoons tomato paste
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
1, 14.5-ounce can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
1, 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes
1”-2” piece Parmigiano Reggiano rind (optional)
1/2 pound ditalini pasta (can also use tubetti or conchigliette)
1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
1/2 cup grated Parmigiano Reggiano
Crusty bread

Directions

Heat the oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add the pancetta and cook until fat has rendered and it begins to crisp 6 to 10 minutes. Add the onion and cook until softened, 3 to 7 minutes. Season with the salt, pepper, red pepper flakes and sage, then add the celery and carrots. Cook until vegetables have softened, 7 to 10 minutes. Add the garlic, cook for 1 minute then add in the tomato paste, cooking for 1 minute more. Stir in the chicken broth, beans, diced tomatoes, and Parmigiano rind if using. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer for 20 minutes. Add the pasta, cover, and cook until al dente.

Ladle into low bowls, and sprinkle with parsley and grated Parmigiano Reggiano before serving with bread alongside.

Cook’s Notes

If you prefer dried beans to canned, about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of dried beans, soaked and cooked, will yield about the same as a 14.5-ounce can.

total time: 50 minutes

active prep: 30 minutes

serves: 6

difficulty: *easy*