

From the Kitchen of Gail Johnson

Tuscan White Bean Soup

White beans (cannellini), along with garlic and rosemary, are usual in many soups in Tuscany. Serve with a mixed green salad.

- 1½ cups dried cannellini (white beans), soaked and drained**
- 1 bay leaf**
- 4 teaspoons olive oil**
- 1 medium yellow onion, coarsely chopped**
- 2 carrots, peeled and coarsely chopped**
- 4 cloves garlic, chopped**
- 4 sprigs and 1 tablespoon chopped rosemary**
- 1 cup vegetable stock or broth**

In a Dutch oven over high heat, boil 4 cups of water and add white beans, ½ teaspoon salt and bay leaf. Then reduce heat and simmer for one hour until beans are tender. Do not overcook. Drain beans and reserve half cup of the liquid.

In a small bowl, mash half of the cooked beans and mix it with the reserved liquid to form a paste. Place the Dutch oven over high medium flame and heat the olive oil. Sautee garlic, onions and carrots until carrots are cooked. Pour in vegetable stock. Add chopped rosemary, beans and bean paste. Bring to a boil and season with salt and black pepper. Let simmer for another 5 minutes.

Ladle the soup into a bowl and top with croûtons. Garnish with a rosemary sprig. Serves 4. 325 Calories per serving

