

Tuscan Spinach Bean Soup

Prep – 10 minutes, Cook – 25-30 minutes, Serves 8-10

SOUP BASE

1 tablespoon olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
3 cloves garlic - minced
2 celery ribs, coarse dice
3 carrots, peeled and diced
2 cups broth – [2 cups water and 3 tablespoons McKays chicken-like flavoring]
1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes, un-drained
2 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 teaspoons basil
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon pepper

ADD

1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans (white kidney beans), rinsed and drained
12 ounces fresh spinach, stemmed and cut up (about 4 cups)
½ cup orzo pasta
1 to 2 cups of water OR chicken-like broth (for more flavor)

Grated Parmesan cheese, as accompaniment

1. In a large flameproof casserole or large soup pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion, garlic, celery, and carrots. Cook, stirring often, until onion is softened, 5 to 6 minutes.

2. Mix in broth, tomatoes with their liquid, parsley, basil, salt and pepper.
[This soup base can be made ahead & frozen]

[If soup based made ahead, on the day you wish to serve – thaw/reheat soup base], then,

3. Mix in orzo pasta, parsley, beans, and spinach. Add extra water or broth. Heat to boiling, reduce heat to low, and simmer 15 to 20 minutes, or until pasta is done (will enlarge like rice and become tender).

4. Serve hot, sprinkled with Parmesan cheese, if desired.