

Recipe from FormerChef.com

White Bean Soup with Greens and Homemade Italian Sausage

1 lb. great northern beans, soaked overnight
1 lb. Italian sausage (removed from casing or made fresh*)
2 cups diced onion (1 onions= 3/4 lb.)
3/4 cup diced celery (2 stalks= 4 oz.)
3/4 cup diced carrot (2 carrots = 4 oz.)
1 Tbsp. minced garlic (3 small cloves)
1 Tbsp. dried oregano
1 Tbsp. dried basil
3.5-4 quarts total liquid (I used a mix of homemade chicken stock, vegetable stock and water)
salt and pepper to taste
8 oz. greens (mustard, turnip, collards, spinach or escarole)*

Yield is approx. 1 gallon (4 quarts or about 10- 1.5 cup portions)

*Greens; I wanted to use Escarole but could not find it in any of the stores I went to. Instead, I bought a bag of "Mixed Southern Greens" at Trader Joe's and used those. You can use any greens you like.

*If you want to make this soup vegan/vegetarian/low fat, simply leave out the sausage, sauté the vegetables in olive oil and cook the beans in vegetable stock.

1. Soak the beans overnight, covered in enough water to allow them to expand.
2. Heat a large soup pot over medium heat, add the sausage and break apart with a spoon into small pieces. Cook until done and browned and then remove from the pot with a slotted spoon. At this point, you can cook the vegetables in the fat from the sausage (I did, more flavor!) or clean it out and start fresh using a couple of tablespoons of olive oil.
3. Into the soup pot with the hot fat or oil, add the onions and sauté over medium heat until they start to get soft, about 4-5 minutes. Add the carrots and celery and cook another 4-5 minutes. Add the garlic and dried herbs and cook another two minutes. Add the sausage back into the pot along with the drained soaked white beans and stir to combine everything together.
4. Add enough stock or water to the beans to cover them by a couple of inches and bring to a simmer. Cook until the beans are tender, about 1.5 hours. Add more stock or water as needed to keep the texture "soupy."
5. Before serving, add your chopped greens and stir them in until they wilt. Season the soup with salt and pepper to taste.