



Dunk a mug in the pot ! The broth is so good, you'll drink it on its own. Invest the time to develop the richness, and don't skip the ham hocks! They are the key!

White Bean Soup

Let's keep it simple. Here's a rich, savory, soul-satisfying soup that is easy to make. The broth alone is worth your time, then step it up with the beans and tasty garnishes! You'll be back for seconds!

Ingredients

- 1 pound of dry navy beans, rinsed and drained
- 6 sprigs of parsley
- 6 sprigs of rosemary
- 6 sprigs of thyme
- 3 ham hocks (thawed)
- ¾ medium red onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 large carrot, diced
- 4 cups (32 oz) low sodium chicken stock
- 4 cups water
- ¼ pound pancetta, diced
- 2 cups kale, washed and torn into bite-size pieces
- Optional spice – chili flake, za'atar, or spice of your choice
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt and black pepper, to taste

Choose a deep pot for cooking the soup, as you want the liquid to cover the ham hocks.

In advance: Prep beans in one of two ways. Start by rinsing and draining.

You can soak the beans in a big pot of water overnight, then drain and rinse again in the morning – OR – you can rinse and drain the beans, put them into your soup pot and cover with water by about 2 inches. Then bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and simmer for 5 minutes. Turn off stove, cover the pot, and let the beans sit – covered – for 1 hour. Drain and rinse beans. Either method works.

Prep all of your ingredients. They go in (mostly) all at once. Wrap the herbs in kitchen twine so that they stay together while cooking.

Crisp the pancetta over medium heat in the bottom of your soup pot. Add a small splash of olive oil to get the cooking started. When the pancetta is crisp, remove it from the pot, but leave the drippings in place. Reserve pancetta for later.

Add your soaked / simmered beans to the pot, and swish them around in the pancetta fat. Next, add the ham hocks, onions, carrots, garlic, and herb bundle to the pot. Cover with 4 cups of chicken stock and 4 cups of water. Nestle the hocks so that they are submerged. If you need a little more liquid to cover the hocks, add it now (more water is fine). Don't add salt yet!

Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and allow to gently bubble for 90 minutes or until your beans are tender.

Remove the ham hocks and let them cool for a few minutes, so that you can handle them. Here's the thing about ham hocks. They impart deep flavor, but they don't yield much meat. (That's why we're also using pancetta.) Remove all the meat that you can from the hocks and return it to the pot. Discard the bones.

Remove the herb bundle from the soup. Discard.

Next, thicken the soup. This is a matter of taste. I like soup with veggies I can identify, so I use a light touch on my immersion blender and give the soup a few whirrs, and that's it. If you want a thicker and smoother soup, take out some of the beans and puree them in a blender (be careful with hot liquid!) and put them back in the broth.

When the soup is hot and to your liking, taste for salt. Add if you think it's necessary, or let your family / friends season their bowls individually. (Same goes for pepper.) Garnish with the pancetta and crispy kale bites.

Bonus recipe: Crispy Kale Bites

Preheat oven to 250 degrees F. Toss the two cups of torn kale pieces in half a tablespoon of olive oil. Spread them on a half-sheet tray, sprinkle lightly with chili flake, za'atar, or your favorite seasoning, and bake for 45 minutes or until crispy.

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