

Bean and Escarole Soup
Zuppa di Fagioli e Scarola
Naples at Table ©1998 by Arthur Schwartz

Serves 8

1 pound cannellini beans
2-1/2 quarts water
1 teaspoon salt
1 large bunch escarole or chicory (about 1 pound)
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon finely minced garlic
3 or 4 canned peeled plum tomatoes
1 large rib celery, finely minced
1/2 cup finely cut parsley
1/4 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes

1. In a 4- to 5-quart saucepan or stovetop casserole, combine the beans with 10 cups of water. Add salt and bring to a boil, then adjust the heat so the beans simmer gently, partially covered, for 1 hour or longer, or until fully tender. (Or use four 19-ounce cans of cannellini.)
2. Meanwhile, wash the greens and cut into inch-wide crosswise pieces.
3. Bring a 4- to 5-quart pot of salted water to a rolling boil. Plunge in the greens, and when the water returns to a boil, let them boil for 5 minutes or until just tender. Drain and set aside.
4. When the beans are tender, add the olive oil, the garlic, the tomatoes, chopped or crushed into the pot with your hand; the celery, parsley, and hot pepper. Simmer another 15 minutes.
5. Add the greens and simmer another 5 minutes.
6. Serve hot and pass a cruet of extra-virgin olive oil or hot pepper oil. It can also be served over freselle or dry-toasted bread.

Notes:

- I used one can of cannellini beans for 1-pound of cooked escarole. You can add more if you like.
- I used approximately 1 cup of crushed tomatoes. Again, adjust to your liking.
- I adjusted the seasonings by adding salt and pepper to taste and a fresh bay leaf for more flavor.
- I prefer more broth so I add about a cup of water. You can add or leave out depending on your preference.