

Minestrone with Swiss Chard
Soup Suppers by Arthur Schwartz
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½ pound dried cannellini or other large white beans, such as soldier beans, rinsed and picked over, soaked overnight in water cover by several inches

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil

2 large red onions, peeled, halved and sliced ¼-inch thick (about 3 cups)

4 medium carrots, cubed (about 2 cups)

2 large celery ribs, sliced ½-inch thick (about 1-¼ cups)

1-pound unpeeled new potatoes, cubed (about 2 cups)

3 large garlic cloves, crushed

2 quarts chicken broth

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Parmesan rind or a piece of prosciutto rind (optional)*

1-pound green or red Swiss chard, cut into ½-inch shreds, stems and all

½ pound small macaroni, cooked (2-½ cups uncooked, 4 cups, cooked)

Grated Parmesan or Romano cheese

1. Drain the soaked beans and place them in a pot of fresh cold water just to cover. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until tender. This could be as short a time as 30 minutes or as long as an hour. Taste along the way to catch them as soon as they become tender.
2. In a 6- to 8-quart pot, combine the olive oil and onions over medium-low heat. Let the onions cook, tossing occasionally, while you prepare the carrots, celery and potatoes in that order. Add each to the pot as it is ready and toss well to coat with oil.
3. Stir in the garlic into the vegetables; sauté until you can smell it, about a minute.
4. Add the broth, pepper and cheese rind or prosciutto rind, if using one of them. Bring to a boil and reduce the heat so that soup simmers gently, partially covered, for about 1-½ hours. Stir occasionally.
5. Stir in the Swiss chard and the cooked beans. Increase the heat and bring to a rolling boil. Reduce the heat again and simmer steadily, partially covered, another 10 minutes.
6. Serve the soup over macaroni with grated cheese on the side.

*Donna Note – I used a 4 ounce package of diced pancetta