

Pasta and Bean Soup
(Pasta e Fagioli)

INGREDIENTS:

Servings: 2 people

Dried cannellini beans	5 oz
Small onion	1
Small garlic clove	1
Small carrot	1
Small celery stalk	1
Small unsmoked ham hock	1
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	1 3/4 pints
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	4 oz
Fatty bacon or pancetta	1 oz
Olive oil	3 tbs
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

Servings: 4 people

Dried cannellini beans	10 oz
Onion	1
Garlic clove	1
Carrot	1
Celery stalk	1
Unsmoked ham hock	1
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	1 3/4 quarts
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	7 oz
Fatty bacon or pancetta	2 oz
Olive oil	1/4 cup
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

Servings: 6 people

Dried cannellini beans	1 pound
Small onions	2
Small garlic cloves	2
Small carrots	2
Small celery stalks	2
Large unsmoked ham hocks	1
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	2 3/4 quarts
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	10 oz
Fatty bacon or pancetta	3 oz
Olive oil	1/2 cup
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

Servings: 8 people

Dried cannellini beans	1 1/2 pounds
Onions	2
Garlic cloves	2
Carrots	2
Celery stalks	2
Unsmoked ham hocks	2
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	3 1/2 quarts
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	14 oz
Fatty bacon or pancetta	4 oz
Olive oil	1/2 cup

Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

Servings: 10 people

Dried cannellini beans	1 3/4 pounds
Small onions	3
Small garlic cloves	3
Small carrots	3
Small celery stalks	3
Large unsmoked ham hocks	2
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	1 1/4 gallons
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	1 pound
Fatty bacon or pancetta	5 oz
Olive oil	1/2 cup
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

Servings: 12 people

Dried cannellini beans	2 pounds
Onions	3
Garlic cloves	3
Carrots	3
Celery stalks	3
Unsmoked ham hocks	3
Beef stock (preferably home-made)	1 1/2 gallons
Dried macaroni, spaghetti or any soup pasta	1 1/4 pounds
Fatty bacon or pancetta	6 oz
Olive oil	2/3 cup
Salt and freshly ground pepper	to taste
Freshly grated Parmesan cheese	to taste

TOOLS:

Large bowl
Colander
Stockpot with lid
Chef's knife
Cutting board
Wooden spoon
Blender

PREPARATION:

Soak the beans overnight. Drain, rinse, and sort them. *Peel* and coarsely *chop the onion, garlic, and carrot*. Chop the celery.

Cook the vegetables in a large stockpot, over moderate heat, in olive oil until they are transparent. Add the beans, stock, and the ham hock. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until the beans are tender - about 3 hours.

Remove half the beans and vegetables, and purée in a blender. Return the purée to the soup and mix well. Add the pasta and season, to taste, with salt and pepper. It may be necessary to add some water if the soup is too thick. Mix well and cook until the pasta is "al dente," about 10 minutes. The soup should be quite thick.

Chop the bacon and divide it among the bowls. Ladle the soup over and drizzle, if desired, with olive oil. Offer Parmesan cheese on the side.