

*bean soup (made in two stages--  
broth/beans and soup)* *makes 10 - 12 servings*

**First the broth and cooking the beans half-way:**

1# dried white or navy beans, rinsed well, picked over and soaked overnight or quick-soaked\*  
1 Smoked ham bone or smoked ham hock  
6 cups chicken stock  
3 quarts water (or more as needed to keep beans cooking freely)  
2 bay leaves  
1/2 teaspoon Fresh ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon Kosher salt  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 onion, cut in half  
1 stalk celery  
1 carrot  
10 sprigs fresh parsley and 2 large sprigs thyme tied in a bundle\*\*  
4 drops hot sauce (or to taste)

*\*You do not have to soak beans contrary to common wisdom. They will, however, cook more evenly and (rumor has it) be less gassy if you do soak them. Place the cleaned and sorted beans in the pot with water just to cover overnight. Or for quick soak: place cleaned and sorted beans in pot just barely covered with water and bring to a boil for two minutes. Turn heat off, cover pot, and let sit one hour before making soup. Discard soaking liquid for either method.*

**\*\*Or use just the parsley tied and add 1 teaspoon dried thyme**

*Add all of the broth ingredients to a large (10-12 quart) stock pot. Bring to a boil. Lower heat to a simmer. Let cook about an hour or until beans are just beginning to soften. Take out ham hock or bone and cool a bit. Remove any usable meat, chop, and return to pot. Discard bone/gristle. Remove herb bundle and discard. Remove large pieces of vegetables, cool briefly and chop; return to pot. Don't take out the bay leaves. Whoever gets them does the dishes. Continue below at "Make the Soup."*

## **Second, make the soup:**

*Add to the broth the following:*

2 cups ham cut into half-inch pieces

3 tablespoons tomato paste (or 15 ounce can chopped tomatoes)

2 cups chopped celery

1 cup each chopped onion and carrots

*Bring the pot of soup to a boil. Reduce heat to a healthy simmer and cook another 1-2 hours until beans and all vegetables are tender. (The time will depend somewhat on how high you have the heat, how done the beans already were, etc.) Add water, if needed, to ensure vegetables are all cooking very freely in liquid.*

*Taste and adjust seasonings if necessary. If you'd like a thicker soup, remove two cups of beans and vegetables and mash or puree in the food processor. Return mashed vegetables to pot and taste again for seasoning. Serve hot with corn bread, butter, and honey. Store cooled leftovers well-covered in the refrigerator three days or in the freezer for up to six months.*

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