

## Tuscan Bean Soup with Rosemary and Chicken

makes 5 quarts approximately

-1/2 - 3/4# dried cannellini or northern white bean/navy beans -1 ham hock (I used half a large one)  
-2 large onions, peeled and chopped, divided  
-4 cloves garlic, chopped, divided  
-1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
-2 sprigs rosemary, divided (Leave one whole; mince the other.)

3 pieces chicken with bones and skin  
1 quart chicken stock, low or no salt (3-4 cups)  
1 cup white wine or water  
2 firm red tomatoes (or 1 15 oz can chopped tomatoes)  
1 cup chopped carrots  
3 stalks celery with leaves, chopped  
1/4 c chopped cabbage, 1/4 c chopped green beans, optional-(I had them and put them in.)  
1/4 cup chopped parsley  
Kosher salt; freshly ground pepper (start with 1 tsp salt and 1/8 t pepper)  
Several drops of Tabasco or other hot sauce (or a pinch of crushed red pepper or ground cayenne)

1 cup fresh spinach leaves

1/2 cup grated Parmesan--garnish  
Zest of 1 fresh lemon--garnish

1. Bring to a boil beans and 2-3 quarts peppered (no salt) water. Add ham hock, 1 of the chopped onions, and a whole sprig of rosemary. (Leave the stem in until soup is done; the leaves will have cooked and become quite tender at the end of 3 hours.) Lower heat, cover partially, and let cook at a low boil for about 1 1/2 hours until beans are becoming tender. Add some water if beans are not boiling freely. Remove ham hock, cool, shred (leave out fat and gristle) and return meat to pot.

2. Add chicken stock, wine or water, 3 pieces of chicken, and all of the vegetables/herbs (including the other chopped onion, the other sprig of minced rosemary, and the other 2 chopped garlic cloves) except the spinach. Stir in salt, pepper and Tabasco. Return to a boil; lower heat and simmer 2-3 minutes. Remove tomatoes and let cool a few minutes. Skin, chop and return tomatoes to pot.
3. Cook soup until chicken is no longer pink in middle and vegetables are tender, 20 minutes or so. Remove chicken and let cool for five minutes. Skin, bone and chop. Return meat to the pot; discard bones and skin. (Unless you have a dog who likes chicken skin.) Taste and adjust seasonings.
4. Remove 2 cups of the soup and puree in the food processor or mash well with a potato masher. You could also use an immersion blender very briefly.\* Return mashed soup to pot, stir, and bring to a boil. Cook a couple of minutes and lower heat to a bare simmer.
5. Add spinach; cook 1 minute. Stir well. Taste and adjust seasonings. More salt? Pepper? Hot sauce? Carefully add just a bit of any of these and taste again.
6. Serve hot with 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan and a 1/2 tsp lemon rind to top each large bowl. A dusting of pepper might be welcome as well.

*\*You want a soup that shows all of its elements—beans, vegetables and meat—merely thickened by the small amount of pureed soup. You don't want a totally pureed soup.*