
Slow Cooker Brothy Beans

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Servings: 4

Preparation Time: 40 minutes

Start to Finish Time: 7 hours 40 minutes

8 ounces dried cannellini beans, rinsed
1 bulb fennel, halved lengthwise, cored and sliced, root to tip
1 plum tomato, cored and halved
7 cloves garlic, peeled
6 wide strips lemon zest (from one lemon)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 small bunch thyme
1/4 bunch parsley stems
1/4 cup chopped parsley leaves
1 large leek (white and light green part only), halved lengthwise
Kosher salt
freshly ground pepper
6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
4 slices white or sourdough bread, 1/2 to 3/4 inch thick
1/4 cup chopped fresh chives

In a six- to eight-quart slow cooker, combine the beans, fennel, tomato, six cloves of garlic and the lemon zest. Tie the thyme, parsley stems and 1/2 leek together with kitchen twine. Add them to the pot. Add four and one-half cups of water, one teaspoon of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Cover and cook on LOW for seven to nine hours until the beans are tender.

Preheat the broiler. Discard the leek bundle from the beans and stir well. Gently smash the garlic against the side of the slow cooker. Season with salt and pepper. Let stand uncovered.

Thinly slice the remaining one-half leek into matchsticks. Heat 1/4 cup of olive oil in a medium nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add the leek and cook, stirring frequently, until lightly browned and crisp, 6 to 9 minutes. Transfer the crispy leek to paper towels with a slotted spoon. Season with salt. Reserve the leek oil.

Arrange the bread on a baking sheet and broil both sides with the leek oil. Pour any excess leek oil into the beans. Broil the bread, turning once, until golden, 3 to 5 minutes. Rub with the remaining garlic clove and season with salt.

Stir the lemon juice into the beans. Divide among bowls with a slotted spoon. Pour some bean broth into each bowl. Drizzle evenly with the remaining two tablespoons of olive oil. Top with the crispy leek, chives and chopped parsley. Serve with the bread.

Side Dishes, Slow Cooker

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 202 Calories; 20g Fat (88.3% calories from fat); 1g Protein; 5g Carbohydrate; 1g Dietary Fiber; 0mg Cholesterol; 14mg Sodium. Exchanges: 0 Grain(Starch); 1/2 Vegetable; 0 Fruit; 4 Fat.