

# POTATO AND WHITE BEAN SOUP WITH ESCAROLE

SERVES 8

.....  
*1 pound dried white beans, such as Great Northern or cannellini, about 2 ½ cups\**  
*1 2-3 inch piece of kombu (optional)*  
*2 Tablespoons unrefined, cold-pressed extra-virgin olive oil*  
*1 large onion, halved and thinly sliced*  
*4 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced*  
*8 cups chicken stock, vegetable stock or water*  
*1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes (or other boiling potato), cubed*  
*1 6-inch sprig of fresh rosemary (optional)*  
*3-4 teaspoons sea salt (depending on saltiness of the stock)*  
*1 head escarole, leaves coarsely chopped*  
*Grated Pecorino-Romano or Parmesan cheese for serving, if desired*  
.....

1. Wash beans well and pick over for stones and debris. Soak beans with kombu in plenty of fresh cold water overnight or at least 6 hours. This can be done in a covered container or in a pot (I use the same pot for soaking as for cooking the soup) on a countertop. Refrigerate if your kitchen is warm.
2. Just before you begin cooking, drain the beans into a colander. Heat the oil over medium heat in a large heavy-bottomed pot, and add the onion and garlic. Cook until softened, about 8-10 minutes.
3. Add the beans and stock to the pot and raise the heat to high. You can add the kombu to the pot, if you like for additional alkalinity. Bring soup to a boil, cover, then lower to a simmer. Cook for 1 hour.
4. Add the potato, sea salt and (optional) rosemary. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Test the beans for tenderness. If they're not done, continue to simmer until they're tender. Once beans are tender, you can puree the soup to your desired consistency or leave chunky. Remove the sprig of rosemary and kombu before pureeing.
5. Stir in the escarole and cook until wilted. Serve with grated cheese, if desired.

\*If you want to use canned beans, you will need 4 15-ounce cans, or about 6 cups. Follow the directions below:

1. Sauté onions and garlic.
2. Add potatoes, stock, salt and (optional) rosemary. Cook for 30 minutes or until tender.
3. Add beans to pot and cook until heated through. Remove rosemary and kombu. Puree to desired consistency (or don't). Stir in escarole.