

SLOW COOKER WHITE BEAN SOUP WITH SAUSAGE AND COLLARDS

SERVES 6

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1 pound dried beans (such as cannellini or great Northern), picked through for stones or debris, soaked for at least 6 hours in cold water and drained*
½ pound andouille sausage links, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise (I used a 12-ounce package of Applegate Farms chicken apple sausage)
1 large onion, chopped
2 stalks celery, chopped
4 sprigs fresh thyme
8 cups low-sodium or unsalted chicken or vegetable broth, preferably homemade
1 bunch collard greens, stems discarded and leaves cut into-bite-size pieces (about 8 cups)
1 Tablespoon apple cider vinegar or red wine vinegar
sea salt and black pepper to taste (salt will vary based on what stock or sausage you use)
unrefined olive oil for drizzling (optional)

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1. In a 4-6 quart slow cooker (mine is a 6.5 quart and it turned out great), combine the beans, sausage, onion, celery, and thyme. Add the broth and stir to combine.
2. Cover and cook until the beans are tender, on LOW for 7 to 8 hours or HIGH for 4-5 hours.
3. 20 minutes before serving, remove and discard the thyme sprigs and add the collard greens. Cover and cook until the greens are tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in the vinegar and salt and pepper to taste.
4. Drizzle with olive oil, if desired.

*You don't have to soak the beans if you don't have time, but it makes them more digestible. You do need to soak them for the stovetop version.

For a stovetop version, sauté onions and celery in 2 Tablespoons olive oil. Add soaked, dried beans, sausage, thyme and stock. Bring to a boil, lower to a simmer and cook covered until beans are tender, about 60-90 minutes. Add greens and cook until tender, about 10-15 minutes. Stir in vinegar and season with salt and pepper to taste. Drizzle with olive oil if desired.