

Tuscan White Bean and Escarole Soup

(Acquacotta) Serves 8-10

Ingredients

1 large onion, chopped coarse
2 celery ribs, chopped coarse
4 garlic cloves, peeled
1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
1/2 C extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper
1/8 tsp red pepper flakes
8 C chicken broth
1 fennel bulb, 2 Tbl. fronds minced, stalks discarded, bulb halved, cored and cut into 1/2 inch pieces
2 (15-ounce) cans cannellini beans, drained with liquid reserved, beans rinsed
1 small head escarole (10 -ounce) trimmed and cut into 1/2inch pieces (8 Cups)
2 large egg yolks
1/2 C chopped fresh parsley
1 Tbl. minced fresh oregano
Grated Pecorino Romano cheese
Lemon wedges

Toast

10 (1/2inch thick) slices thick-crust bread
1/4 C extra-virgin olive oil
Salt and pepper

Before you begin

If escarole is unavailable, you can substitute 8 ounces of kale. We prefer Pecorino Romano's salty flavor, but Parmesan can be substituted, if desired. If your cheese has a rind, slice it off the wedge and add it to the pot with the broth in step 3 (remove it before serving). We like to serve this soup the traditional way, with a poached or soft-cooked egg spooned onto of the toast before the broth is ladled into the bowl.

Instructions

1. **FOR THE SOUP:** Pulse onion, celery, and garlic in food processor until very finely chopped, 15 to 20 pulses, scraping down sides of bowl as needed. Transfer onion mixture to Dutch oven. Add tomatoes and their juice to now empty processor and pulse until tomatoes are finely chopped, 10 to 12 pulses; set aside.
2. Stir oil, 3/4 tsp salt and pepper flakes into onion mixture. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until light brown fond begins to form on bottom of the pot, 12 to 15 minutes. Stir in tomatoes, increase heat to high, and cook stirring frequently, until mixture is very thick and rubber spatula leaves distinct trail when dragged across bottom of pot, 9 to 12 minutes.
3. Add broth and fennel bulb to pot and bring to simmer. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until fennel begins to soften, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in beans and escarole and cook until fennel is fully tender, about 10 minutes.
4. Whisk egg yolks and reserved bean liquid together in bowl, then stir into soup. Stir in parsley, oregano, and fennel fronds. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

5. **FOR THE TOAST:** Adjust oven rack about 5 inches from broiler element and heat broiler. Place bread on aluminum foil-lined rimmed baking sheet, drizzle oil, and season with salt and pepper. Broil until bread is deep golden brown.

Place 1 slice bread in bottom of each individual bowl. Ladle soup over toasted bread. Serve, passing Pecorino and lemon wedges separately.