

Pasta E Fagioli

For the soup

1 1-lb. bag 16 Bean Soup Mix
2 tbs. EVOO
3 oz. pancetta, diced
1 large yellow onion, diced
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
1 28-oz. can whole tomatoes (San Marzano work best)
1 cup dry red wine
4 cups chicken stock
Kosher salt, to taste
Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For serving

Small pasta shells
Basil leaves, julienned
Freshly grated Parmesan

To make the soup

The night before you make the soup, soak the beans (discard the seasoning packet) in a large plastic or glass bowl in cold water. Make sure to leave about 1 1/2" of extra water above the beans because they will soak up the water. Cover with a cloth and leave on your counter overnight.

Drain and rinse the beans. Add them to a large pot filled with 8 cups of water. Bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer. Simmer for about 1 1/2 hours or until the beans are tender. It's okay if the beans lose their skin during this process. Occasionally skim off any foam that floats to the top.

About 20 minutes before the beans are finished, heat the oil in a large Dutch oven (big enough for all the soup eventually) over medium-high heat. Sauté pancetta and onion for about 15 minutes, or until both are browned. Add the garlic and red pepper flakes; sauté 1 minute. Carefully crush the tomatoes by hand into the pot and add their juices. Add the red wine, chicken stock, and (to start – you can add more later) 1 tbs. Kosher salt and 1 tsp. black pepper. Stir to combine, lower the heat to medium-low, and allow to simmer for about 10 minutes.

Drain the beans and add them to the soup. Stir to combine and continue to simmer for 15 minutes. Using an immersion blender* blend until soup is your desired consistency. Taste and adjust salt and pepper as needed.

To serve

Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add a heaping tablespoon of Kosher salt. Boil the pasta (about a half a handful per person) until al dente (usually about 8 minutes). Drain pasta.

Ladle the soup into bowls, top with pasta, then basil, then Parmesan.

*Or carefully ladle about 1/3 of the soup into a blender. Leave the top off the blender, cover with a dish towel, and blend until smooth. Add mixture back to pot.

