

Fassolatha (White Bean Soup)

Bean soup or *fassolatha* (fah-soh-LAH-tha) is a common menu item in the Orthodox household. It's also a staple of the Lenten season. This recipe is hearty, nutritious, and delicious.

Ingredients

- 1 pound dried white beans (such as Great Northern or Navy beans)
- 10 cups water
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 large onion (diced)
- 2 medium carrots (diced)
- 2 ribs celery (diced)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced plum tomatoes (un-drained)
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- Dash salt (or to taste)
- Dash freshly ground black pepper (or to taste)
- *Garnish:* 1/4 cup fresh parsley (chopped)

Steps to Make It

Soaking dried beans rehydrates them and results in more tender beans and shorter cooking time. If you don't have an extra day to soak the beans overnight, you can try the quick soak method below.

Quick Soaking Method

1. Gather the ingredients.
2. Add beans plus enough water to cover beans by 2 inches to a pot.
3. Add 2 tablespoons salt and stir.
4. Bring beans to a rolling boil.
5. Turn off heat, cover, and soak for an hour.
6. Drain and rinse beans under cold water before using.

For the Soup:

1. Gather the ingredients.

2. Add the beans, water, and olive oil to a large, non-reactive soup pot and bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer covered until beans are tender but not mushy - about 1 hour.
4. Add vegetables, tomatoes, tomato paste, and bay leaf to the pot and simmer uncovered another 30 to 45 minutes for flavors to meld and soup to thicken a bit.
5. Season the soup with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
6. Remove the bay leaf and sprinkle with chopped fresh parsley before serving.
7. Enjoy!