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WHITE BEAN AND TOMATO SOUP

Don't say you don't like bean soup without trying this one first. All it takes is a little planning to prepare the beans, which are soaked for 12 hours to release substances that make them indigestible. Take the opportunity to cook a good amount and freeze them for future recipes.

In fact, speaking of beans, and especially the small white ones, **they are full of fiber, amino acids and other nutrients that support the intestine by feeding the beneficial bacteria in the colon.** They help with immune health and regulate systemic inflammation in the body. This soup is both comfort food and highly nutritious.

Ingredients

- 2 to 4 tablespoons of extra virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 onion
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1-1/4 cups concentrated tomato paste (*preferably from a glass bottle, and 100% tomato)
- 1 cup of white beans
- 3 cups of water
- 1 cup vegetable or chicken broth
- Serve with coarsely ground black pepper or smoked paprika
- Also, lots of chopped cilantro or onion
- Sea salt to taste

Preparation

1. Place the beans in a bowl and cover with water — if any float, discard them.
2. Leave the beans to soak for 12 hours, and change the water once during this period. Soaking reduces cooking time and eliminates substances that make the beans indigestible.

3. Drain the beans and discard the soaking water. Transfer the grains to the pressure cooker, cover with water and add the bay leaves. Cover the pan and place over high heat. When it starts to whistle, lower the heat and let it cook for another 15 minutes.

4. While the beans are cooking, pulse the onion and garlic in a food processor until puréed.

5. In a pan add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the onion, garlic and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring, until lightly golden-brown, about 1 minute.

6. Add the tomato paste to the pan along with the beans, salt and broth. Bring the liquid to a boil and lower the heat so the mixture boils quickly. Mash about a quarter of the beans with a potato masher or wooden spoon against the side of the pan and cook until thickened, 7 to 15 minutes. Taste and add more salt if desired.

7. Serve hot in bowls with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, a pinch of pepper and chopped coriander.

* Glass packaging helps avoid contamination by chemicals released from plastic.