

White Beans with Cabbage, Pasta, and Ham

MAKES: 4 servings

TIME: 30 minutes

F M

Made with good chicken stock, this is a sensational cold-weather dish that can be made with a variety of greens (try spinach, for example), pasta shapes, or meats, like cooked bacon or sausage. See the chart on page 422 for ideas.

Other beans you can use: chickpeas or pink beans.

Salt

3 cups chopped cabbage, preferably Savoy

8 ounces small pasta, like cavatelli or orecchiette

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 cups chopped leek or onion

1 celery stalk, chopped

2 sprigs fresh thyme

1/4 cup chopped prosciutto or 1/2 cup chopped ham

1 cup chicken or other stock (to make your own, see pages 157–159), or more as needed

3 cups cooked or canned cannellini or other white beans, drained but still moist

Freshly ground black pepper

Freshly grated Parmesan or pecorino Romano cheese for garnish

1 Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat and salt it. Add the cabbage and cook until just tender, about 3 minutes; use a slotted spoon or small strainer to fish it out, drain (shock if you like; see page 240), and set aside. When the pot returns to a boil, add the pasta and cook until tender but firm, about 7 minutes or so, and drain it.

2 Meanwhile, put the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. When hot, add the leek and celery and cook until softened, about 5 minutes. Add the thyme, prosciutto, stock, beans, and cabbage and sprinkle with salt and pepper; cook until the flavors blend and everything is well heated, about 5 minutes more. If the mixture dries out, add a little more stock; it should be moist but not soupy.

3 Combine the bean mixture and pasta in the large pot and stir gently. Taste and adjust the seasoning, sprinkle with Parmesan, and serve.

p 421

Mark Bittman, "How to Cook Everything"