

Creamy Braised White Beans

By Ali Slagle

YIELD 4 servings

TIME 25 minutes

Everything you need to make this humble-but-satisfying meal is probably in your kitchen at this very moment. Two cans of beans (chickpeas and white beans) are simmered with milk, a whole head of garlic, herbs and nutmeg for a rich and creamy vegetarian dinner that can be on the table in under a half-hour. Be sure to use whole milk here — it's the most flavorful and will yield the best results. Feel free to wilt greens like chard, watercress, arugula or basil into the beans, and serve with grated Parmesan and red-pepper flakes. A slice of crusty bread slicked with caramelized garlic is the perfect crunchy accompaniment to velvety beans.

INGREDIENTS

1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 head garlic, halved crosswise
1 cup whole milk
1 (15-ounce) can chickpeas, with their liquid
1 (15-ounce) can white beans, such as cannellini or Great Northern, drained and rinsed
1 thyme sprig, 2 sage leaves or 1 bay leaf
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg, allspice or garam masala
Kosher salt and black pepper
4 slices crusty bread or thick toast
Extra-virgin olive oil, for serving
Freshly grated Parmesan, for serving
Aleppo pepper or red-pepper flakes, for serving

PREPARATION

Step 1

In a medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium-high heat. Add the garlic, cut side down, and cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes.

Step 2

Add the milk, chickpeas and their liquid, white beans, thyme and nutmeg and stir to combine. Season generously with salt and pepper. When the mixture begins to bubble around the edges of the pan (you don't want it to come to a full boil), reduce the heat to low and let it simmer, stirring occasionally, until it has thickened and tastes great to you, about 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Step 3

Use a fork to remove the garlic halves from the beans. Set aside until cool enough to handle, then use the fork to remove the cloves from the skins. Spread the cloves on bread or toast.

Step 4

If you would like the beans to be more stew-like, mash some of the beans using a potato masher or the back of a spoon. Serve beans and milk in bowls. Garnish as you wish, with a drizzle of oil, a sprinkle of Parmesan and a pinch of Aleppo pepper and black pepper. Serve with the bread alongside for dipping.

Tip

You can reheat leftovers the next day over low heat; the sauce will have thickened, but the beans will still be delicious.

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