

Pasta and bean soup (Pasta e fagioli)



A warming bowl of this hearty, healthy soup recipe is filling enough for dinner.

Ingredients

- 90ml/3¼fl oz extra virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 1 onion, peeled, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled, chopped
- ½ tsp dried chilli flakes
- 600g/1lb 5oz mixed vegetables (such as courgette, fennel, swede, potato, sweet potato, leek, celery, carrot or peas), chopped into 1cm/½in cubes
- 3-4 pinches dried mixed herbs (such as rosemary, oregano and thyme)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 litre/1¾ pints chicken or vegetable stock, preferably home-made
- 80g/2¾oz dried pasta, such as penne
- 1 x 400g/14oz can beans (such as cannellini, borlotti, haricot or chickpeas), drained and rinsed
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 50g/2oz freshly grated parmesan
- 1 large or 2 small very ripe tomatoes, finely chopped

Preparation method

1. Heat 60ml/2¼fl oz of the oil in a heavy-based pan over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and chilli flakes and fry for 2-3 minutes, or until softened.
2. Add all of the mixed vegetables (except the peas, if using) and the dried mixed herbs to the pan. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper. Fry for 2-3 minutes, or until the vegetables have softened.
3. Reduce the heat to medium, cover the pan with a lid and continue to fry for 10-15 minutes, stirring regularly, or until the vegetables have softened and are pale golden-brown.
4. Add the stock, pasta, beans, bay leaves and peas (if using), then bring the mixture to the boil. Return the mixture to a simmer and continue to simmer, covered, for 20-25 minutes, or until the vegetables are tender and the pasta has absorbed some of the liquid and is tender. Remove from the heat and set aside to cool slightly before serving.
5. Meanwhile, in a bowl, mix together the parmesan, chopped tomatoes and the remaining 30ml/1fl oz of olive oil until well combined.
6. To serve, spoon the pasta e fagioli into four serving bowls. Spoon over the parmesan and tomato mixture. Season, to taste, with freshly ground black pepper. Drizzle a splash of olive oil over each serving.