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White Bean, Rice, and Potato Stew
from the Aragon Province of Spain
(Makes 4 to 6 servings)

In medieval times, the kingdom of Aragon was joined to Catalonia and formed one of the mightiest of Mediterranean powers. Today Aragon is a region of Spain, and the food of Aragon is simple and rustic. This preparation is called *recao de Binéfar*, named after a small town northwest of Lerida. This stew should be somewhat soupy by the end of the cooking time, so if it isn't, pour in a little water. Some cooks also add slices of cooked sausage or cooked ham.

1 cup (1/2 pound) dried white beans, picked over, rinsed, soaked in water to cover overnight, and drained
1 quart water
1 medium-large onion, chopped
6 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 bay leaf
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3/4 pound boiling potatoes, peeled and diced
2-1/4 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup medium-grain rice, such as Calarosa
1 teaspoon sweet paprika

1. Place the beans in a large saucepan and add 3 cups of the water, the onion, garlic, bay leaf, and olive oil. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low. Cover and simmer for 1 hour.
2. Add the potatoes, salt, and cook until the potatoes are almost tender, about 2 minutes. Add the rice and paprika, bring to a boil, and return the heat to low. Cover and cook until the rice is tender, about 15 minutes. Add the remaining 1-cup of water to make the stew soupy, if necessary.
3. Remove the stew from the heat and let stand, uncovered, for 5 minutes before serving.