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Italian Escarole and White Bean Soup

Serves 6

I love the old-world, rustic flavors of this hearty soup. Credit for this recipe goes to my friend Julia her parents emigrated from Sicily to America, and cooking is in her veins. Italians are known for feeding large families on tight budgets with peasant dishes such as this, and beans were often used because they are inexpensive, filling, and nutritious. This dish takes about 20 minutes to make, start to finish. Leftovers are great for lunch.

10 ounces ditalini pasta (use brown rice pasta for gluten-free)
Kosher salt
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 medium onion, chopped
8 cups (64 ounces) Swanson's 33% less sodium chicken or vegetable broth*
1 (15-ounce) can cannellini beans* rinsed and drained
Freshly cracked black pepper
1 head escarole, leaves washed and torn into a few pieces
Freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, for serving (optional)

**Read the label to be sure this product is gluten-free.*

Cook the pasta to al dente in a pot of salted boiling water according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

Heat a large nonstick pot over medium heat. When hot, add the oil and onion and cook, stirring, until golden, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the broth and beans and bring to a boil. Season with black pepper to taste, and then add the escarole. Cook until the escarole wilts, about 15 minutes.

To serve divide the cooked pasta among 6 serving bowls. Ladle the soup over the pasta, sprinkle with Parmesan, if desired, and serve.

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A COOK'S COMPANION

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Nutrition Information:

Per Serving: 2 generous cups (not including Parmesan)

Calories: 300

Fat 2 g

Saturated Fat: 0.5 g

Cholesterol: 0 mg

Carbohydrate: 55 g

Fiber: 7 g

Protein: 15 g

Sugars 2 g

Sodium 779 mg

Food Facts meet escarole

Escarole (pronounced ESS-ka-roll) is a variety of endive whose leaves are broader, paler, and less bitter. It contains a number of nutrients, including folate, fiber, and vitamins C and K. If you can't find it, you can substitute Swiss chard or any other leafy green vegetable.

Skinny Scoop

Nothing can ruin a dish like mushy pasta. To avoid that situation, cook the pasta in a separate pot. Then when you're ready to serve, divide the pasta among serving bowls, ladle in the soup, and top with cheese.