

HAM & BEAN SOUP

Last Modified: 12/06/2016

PREP: 24 Hrs
COOK: 10+ Hrs
STOVETOP

F MEDIUM

SOUP-VEGETABLE

MAKES 24 SERVINGS

QUA	MEASURE	INGREDIENT	PROCESS
4	Pounds	Dried Navy Beans	Soaked
2	Pounds	Sugar Cured Ham	Boiled
4 +/-	Tbsp	Ham Base (Better Than Bouillon)	To Taste
OR			
2 +/-	Pounds	Leftover Ham Bone	Boiled
OR			
3 +/-	Pounds	Smoked Ham Hocks	Boiled
OR (MY PERSONAL FAVORITE)			
3 +/-	Pounds	Smoked Pork Loin (Bone-In)	Boiled
1	Pound	Thin Sliced Bacon	Lardons
6	Medium	Starchy Potatoes (Idaho / Russet)	Baked
3	Large	Yellow Onions	Chopped
2	Cups	Carrots (Peeled)	Diced
1	Cup	Celery	Diced
3	Tbsp	Unsalted Butter	
1/4	Cup	All Purpose Flour	
1	Cup	Water	
5	Quarts	Chicken Stock (Swanson)	
1	Tsp	Cracked Black Peppercorns	Crushed
1	Tsp	Kosher Salt	
1/4	Cup	Dried Parsley	
1	Tbsp	Dried Basil	
1	Tsp	Dried Thyme	
4 ~ 6	Whole	Dried Bay Leaves	

PREPARATION

FACTOID	I tend to make a double batch of this fantastic Soup every spring using any leftover Ham & Bones from our family Easter Ham Dinner. This Soup freezes extremely well.
CAUTION	For information about the toxins found in Dried Beans, see: Ron's Gold Plated Cooking Factoids at the beginning of Book #1.
CAUTION	Some bags of dried Beans have instructions for doing a "quick soak". Please take the time to soak any dried Beans for at least 8 hours. ALWAYS discard the soaking water since that is where all of those poisonous toxins have relocated.
FACTOID	Sue & I "discovered" a local butcher that smokes his own Pork. He sells end cuts from his whole bone-in smoked Pork Loins at half price. I chop the Meat & add it and the bones in the soup in Step #3. Removing the bones just before serving. Look around - there may a smoke house near you.
TOOLS	1) Large Stainless Steel Skillet 2) Large Stock Pot & Lid 3) Potato Masher OR Food Processor

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PREP	DISH 1) Cut the Ham into large pieces and set them aside. 2) Chop the Yellow Onions and set them aside. 3) Dice the Carrots and add them on top of the Onions. 3) Dice the Celery and add it top of the Onions. 3) Crack the Black Peppercorns and set them aside.
1	The Day Before: Spread the dried Beans out on a paper towel and discard all discolored and damaged Beans (halves are OK). Remove and discard any pieces of gravel and or stones. Place the Beans in a stock pot and add in enough water to cover the beans by 4 inches. Stir the Beans and pick out any that float. Cover and allow the Beans to soak for at least overnight or up to 24 hours. Stir, drain the Beans and cover them with fresh Water, bring to a boil and cook for 1 hour. Drain and set them aside.
2	Bake the washed Potatoes at 375 degrees until the skins are dry (about 45 minutes). Cut in half and roughly remove the Potato, leaving some large chunks and pieces and set aside the Skins and Potatoes. Cut the Skins into small pieces using scissors.
3	Meanwhile, slice the Sliced Bacon strips into Lardons. In a large skillet over medium high heat, saute the Bacon until done and set it aside. Remove all but 4 tablespoons of the Bacon Fat and set it aside. Saute the Chopped Onions, Carrots and Celery in the remaining Bacon Fat until tender and set them aside. Discard the unused Bacon Fat and melt the Butter in the skillet, stir in the Flour and cook for 3 minutes to make a Roux. Gradually stir in 1 cup of Water. Bring it to a boil, lower the heat and simmer it until thickened (at least 3 minutes).
4	Transfer the mixture into a large stock pot, add in the Chicken Stock, Bay Leaves and the Ham, Bones or Smoked Loin (if using), bring it to a boil, lower the heat and simmer it for 2 to 3 hours until the Ham is fall-apart tender. If using Ham Base in place of the bone, you may skip this step and simply stir in the Ham Base until it is dissolved. Remove and discard the Ham or Loin Bones if you used them. Remove from the heat and allow any fat to float to the top. Remove the fat with a ladle and discard it. Remove and discard the Bay Leaves. Remove and shred any Ham pieces discarding the fat.
5	Add in the Beans, Onions, Carrots and Celery. Add in the Potato Skins (if using), Bacon, Pepper, Salt, Basil, Parsley, Thyme and Bay Leaves. Cook on low heat for 6 to 8 hours (Slow Cooker OK at this point if desired - NO stirring needed) until the Beans are tender, stirring often to prevent burning.
6	Add in the Potatoes, shredded Ham and cook until hot, about 10 minutes.
OPTION	You may alternately either remove the Potato Skins at the above step or chop all or a few of them finely before adding.
7	Use a hand Potato Masher to crush a portion of the Soup Mixture until it reaches the desired consistency. Or you may alternately remove several cups of the Soup and process them in a food processor until smooth (See Caution Below).
CAUTION	BLENDING HOT LIQUIDS: When blending hot liquids, remove the liquid from the heat and allow to cool for at least 5 minutes. Transfer the liquid to a blender or food processor and fill it no more than halfway full. If using a blender, release one corner of the lid; that prevents the vacuum effect that creates heat explosions. Place a towel over the top of the machine, pulse a few times, then process on high speed until smooth.
HINT	If the Soup ends up too thick, you can easily thin it using a little hot Chicken Stock.
SERVE	Ladle into bowls and serve while hot with Soup Crackers on the side..

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