



- Pasta e fagioli – (Borlotti bean soup)

Prep time: 10 min

Cooking time: 1¼ hour

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

300g (10½oz/1½cups) dried borlotti beans or 2x400g (15½oz) tins borlotti beans, drained
4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil for cooking, plus extra for drizzling
1 onion, finely chopped
1 celery stalk, finely chopped
1 carrot, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, crushed
Pinch of dried chilli flakes or chilli powder
2-3 sprigs of rosemary
200g (7oz) Tomato passata
1.2 litres (4fl oz/5 cups) boiling water
1 tablespoon coarse or kosher salt
100g small pasta shape of your choice
Salt and black pepper, to taste

Method

- If you are using dried beans, soak them in cold water overnight, or for at least 8 hours. Drain, place in a large saucepan filled with fresh cold water and bring to the boil. Cover with a lid and simmer for 1½–2 hours until fully cooked. Drain and set aside, covered, until ready to use.
- Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over a low heat, then add the onion, celery and carrot. Cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes, until softened but not browned, then add the garlic, chilli, rosemary (leaves and stalks) and a pinch each of salt and pepper. Cook the *soffritto* for 5–7 minutes, then add the passata.
- Stir well and cook for a further 5 minutes, add the beans, stir and cook for a few minutes, then add the boiling water and stir again. Leave to cook, partially covered, for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- After this time, remove and discard the rosemary sprigs and add the coarse or kosher salt. Spoon out half the soup into a small, deep heatproof bowl or jug (making sure you have a good mix of beans and liquid) and blend with a stick blender to create a smooth 'cream'. Add this back into the unblended mixture and stir to mix the different consistencies together.
- Cook for a final 10–15 minutes, taste and add more seasoning if needed.
- If you don't want to add pasta, you can serve the soup at this stage, with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil on each portion. However, to follow the Italian version, add the pasta to the boiling soup and cook, stirring occasionally, for 4–5 minutes longer than instructed on the packet. (Because the soup is chunky, the pasta absorbs liquid more slowly than in plain salted water.) The final consistency should be quite thick, with some beans and pasta still whole. If you are not planning to eat all the soup immediately, cook only as much pasta and soup as you need. Cook new pasta in the remaining soup when you next serve it.