



SOUPE AU PISTOU

1½ HOURS
30 minutes active

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rovençale soupe au pistou is a humble and hearty vegetable, bean and pasta soup.

Pistou is a coarse puree of basil, garlic, cheese and olive oil similar to Italian pesto. It's used as a finishing touch to infuse the soup with heady herbal notes and bold garlickiness. Pinto beans might seem an odd choice for a Mediterranean dish,

but we liked how they retained their shape and cooked up with a firm yet creamy texture. Dried beans are far superior to canned here, but they do require soaking, so plan accordingly. Before adding the pasta to the soup, we toast it in extra-virgin olive oil to bring out a wheaty, nutty flavor in the pasta.

Don't forget to soak the beans for at least 12 hours or up to 24 hours. Salting the soaking water ensures that the beans cook up tender, as the salt softens the tough skins. It also seasons the beans so that they're full-flavored throughout.

INGREDIENTS

8	OUNCES (1¾ CUPS) DRIED PINTO BEANS
	KOSHER SALT AND GROUND BLACK PEPPER
1	PINT CHERRY TOMATOES
1	MEDIUM LEEK, WHITE AND LIGHT GREEN PARTS ONLY, QUARTERED LENGTHWISE AND THINLY SLICED
1	MEDIUM HEAD GARLIC, TOP ⅓ OF THE HEAD CUT OFF AND DISCARDED, PLUS 5 MEDIUM GARLIC CLOVES, SMASHED AND PEELED
2	BAY LEAVES
1	TEASPOON DRIED THYME
1	OUNCE (ABOUT 2 CUPS LIGHTLY PACKED) FRESH BASIL
1	OUNCE PARMESAN (WITHOUT RIND), ROUGHLY CHOPPED
3	TABLESPOONS EXTRA-VIRGIN OLIVE OIL, DIVIDED
2	TABLESPOONS PINE NUTS
4	OUNCES SMALL PASTA, SUCH AS DITALINI OR ELBOWS
1	MEDIUM CARROT, PEELED AND CHOPPED ½-INCH PIECES
1	SMALL ZUCCHINI, CHOPPED INTO ½-INCH PIECES

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine the beans with 8 cups water and 1 tablespoon salt. Stir, then let soak at room temperature for at least 12 hours or up to 24 hours.

Drain the beans and add them to a large pot along with the tomatoes, leek, garlic head, bay, thyme and 9 cups water. Bring to a boil over medium-high, then reduce to medium and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally and adjusting heat to maintain a simmer, until the beans are tender, 45 to 55 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a food processor, combine the basil, Parmesan, 2 tablespoons of oil, the garlic cloves, pine nuts and ½ teaspoon salt. Process until the mixture has a spreadable consistency, 30 to 60 seconds, scraping the bowl as needed. Transfer the pistou to a small bowl and set aside.

In a small saucepan over medium, heat the remaining 1 tablespoon olive oil until shimmering. Add the pasta and cook, stirring often, until toasted, about 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.

To the beans, add the carrot, 4 teaspoons salt and ½ teaspoon pepper. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the carrots are barely tender, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the toasted pasta and zucchini, then continue to cook until the pasta and zucchini are tender, 6 to 10 minutes.

Remove and discard the bay. Using tongs, remove the garlic head from the pot and squeeze the base of the head to release the cloves into the pot. Using the tongs, gently squeeze any tomatoes that are still whole so they burst. Taste the soup and season with salt and pepper. Ladle the soup into bowls. Swirl 1 tablespoon of pistou into each; serve with the remaining pistou on the side.