

# Tuscan Farro and Bean Soup (Zuppa di Farro)

By Emiko

Zuppa di Farro (farro and bean soup) is an institution in the walled town of Lucca and its surroundings. It is usually made with dried borlotti beans, soaked overnight and cooked the next day for superior texture and flavor, but canned beans work in a pinch. It's served, as all good bean soups are, with a drizzle of good olive oil. A bowl of this washed down with a glass of red wine will keep you warm all winter long.

Serves 4

- Extra-virgin olive oil for serving
  - 1 small brown onion, finely chopped
  - 1 small carrot, finely chopped
  - 1 stick celery, finely chopped
  - 2 tablespoons olive oil
  - 2 ounces (50 grams) pancetta, about 4 thin slices
  - 1 sprig rosemary
  - 4 to 5 fresh sage leaves
  - Salt and pepper
  - Half of a 14-ounce can (7 ounces or 200 grams) peeled tomatoes
  - 18 ounces (500 grams) of canned borlotti beans
  - About 3 cups water or vegetable stock
  - 1 cup (200 grams) of farro (semi-pearled or pearled, not whole grain)
1. Heat the olive oil in a wide soup pot or saucepan; add the chopped onion, carrot, and celery and gently cook until soft and translucent. Add the pancetta and continue cooking until the fat has melted. Add herbs and peeled tomatoes and season with salt and pepper.
  2. Add the cooked borlotti beans, along with their liquid. (Note: if using dried beans for this recipe that you will cook yourself, begin with about 7 ounces or 200 grams dried beans, soak them overnight, and boil them in plenty of water until tender -- about one hour). Stir to combine everything and add 2 cups of water. Bring the mixture to a simmer, cook 10 minutes uncovered, then remove from heat. Remove the rosemary stick and blend (an immersion blender is ideal for this) until smooth.
  3. Add the farro to the bean purée (along with another cup of water to loosen it, using more or less as necessary) and continue cooking over low heat for about 30 to 40 minutes, stirring every now and then to check that the soup is not sticking to the bottom of the pan, until the farro is cooked al dente (with a pleasant bite to it, like pasta). It should be a fairly thick soup but you can add more water to your liking. Check for seasoning.
  4. Serve the soup with freshly ground black pepper and extra virgin olive oil drizzled over the top.