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Sep 9, 2012

Senate Bean Soup

In the early 20th century, someone ordained that bean soup should appear on the menus of the Senate's restaurants. Beige and creamy, studded with ham, and homey as a log cabin, Senate bean soup sends the politically useful message that lawmakers are small-town boys and girls at heart. —*R.W. Apple Jr., from "Politics Aside" (September/October 2001)*

SERVES 4–6

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. dried navy beans, soaked overnight, drained
1 smoked ham hock
1 tbsp. unsalted butter
1 small yellow onion, finely chopped
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Bring beans, ham hock, and 8 cups water to a boil in a 6-qt. Dutch oven over medium-high heat; reduce heat to medium-low, and cook until beans are tender, about 1 hour.

2. Meanwhile, heat butter in a 10" skillet over medium heat. Add onion, and cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer to pot with beans, reduce heat to low to keep warm. Remove ham hock, let cool slightly, and then remove meat, discarding bone, skin, and excess fat; finely chop meat and add back to soup. Lightly mash some of the beans in the pot to create a thick, creamy texture; season with salt and pepper.



Credit: Todd Coleman

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