

Bruschetta con Fagioli **Bruschetta with White Beans**

There are many varieties of white beans called cannellini or Great Northerns, but the very best quality in Italy are called zolfini. The beans should be simmered very slowly as they are done in Tuscany where most housewives keep wood-burning stoves in the kitchen. They place the pan of beans on the top of the stove, cover and leave over a low heat for a few hours, not even allowing the water to simmer.

7 oz dried cannellini beans
Few fresh sage leaves
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil plus extra for painting the bread
6 large slices coarse country bread, about 1/2-in thick
2 garlic cloves
Salt and pepper

Soak the beans in a bowl with enough water to cover for about 12 hours. When ready to cook, preheat the oven to 400°F.

Drain the beans and place them in a flameproof casserole dish with the sage, 1 tbsp of the oil and enough water to cover about 1/2- in.

Cover and bring to a slow boil on the top of the stove.

Place in the oven and simmer for about 3 hours; the beans should be slightly soupy when they are done.

Cut bread slices into individual portion sized pieces. Place the bread slices on a baking sheet and toast in the oven for about 5 minutes, or until barely golden, turning them over once.

Rub with the garlic, paint lightly with olive oil and arrange on individual dishes. Spoon the beans on top and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste and the rest of the oil.

Serve immediately while still hot.