

Tuscan Vegetable Soup with 16 Beans & Parmesan Cheese

1 pound package dried mixed beans
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
2 tbsp chopped fresh thyme
4 garlic cloves
¼ head of green cabbage, cut into ½ inch pieces
2 cups chopped fresh tomatoes
4 celery stalks, cut into ½ inch pieces
3 carrots, cut into ½ inch pieces
10 cups (or more if thinning is desired) vegetable stock or canned vegetable broth
2 medium potatoes, cut into ½ inch pieces
½ cup chopped fresh basil
½ head of red cabbage, cut into ½ inch pieces
4 zucchini, cut into ½ inch pieces
6 ¾ inch thick slices 7-grain bread, toasted
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Olive oil as desired

Place beans in heavy large pot. Pour in enough water to cover beans by 3 inches. Soak over night then drain beans. (Chef's note: Preparation starts day preceding dinner.)

Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in large pot over medium heat. Add onion, thyme and garlic; sauté 5 minutes. Add green cabbage, tomatoes, celery, and carrots; sauté 10 minutes. Add beans, 10 cups stock, potatoes, and basil.

Bring to boil; reduce heat; cover and simmer 1 hour. Add red cabbage and zucchini. Cover and simmer until vegetables are tender (about 20 minutes longer). Stir in cheese. Divide soup among bowls.

Top each serving with ground pepper and additional olive oil and serve.

Makes 10-12 servings.