



Tuscan Beans with Sage and Garlic

Of all the dishes I prepare, this is the single most requested recipe. And the good news is that it's a snap to make. Although you can start with any type of dried white beans, I prefer navy beans. I like the flavor, plus they don't require any presoaking! I strongly recommend that you use a very fragrant, flavor-rich olive oil as a good oil adds great flavor to this dish. Serve with meat, fish, poultry or vegetarian dishes.

For convenience, this dish can be made a few hours ahead and kept on the stove until dinnertime. Reheat for a few minutes (add a little water if necessary), stirring often and watching carefully so beans don't burn.

2 cups	dried navy beans, picked over and rinsed
7 cups	cold water (preferably filtered)
4 or 5	cloves garlic, peeled
2 tbsp	extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp	coarse salt
5 or 6	fresh sage leaves
	Freshly ground pepper

In a medium-size saucepan, combine beans and water. Bring to boil, reduce heat and when beans start to simmer, add garlic, oil, salt and sage leaves. Continue cooking, uncovered, until beans are tender and most of liquid has evaporated, about 1-1/2 hours, stirring periodically. Beans should be gently simmering the entire time; if liquid dries out before beans are finished cooking, add a little more water as required. Spoon into serving bowl and season with freshly ground pepper to taste.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.