

Slow Baked Beans with Kale

1. Preheat the oven to 225 degrees. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil, salt generously and add the kale. Blanch for two minutes, then transfer to a bowl of ice water. Drain, squeeze out water and cut into ribbons. Set aside. (Blanching cuts down on some of kale's bitterness, but you can skip this step if you wish).

2. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil over medium heat in a large ovenproof casserole. Add the onion, carrots and celery. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is tender, about five minutes. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 seconds to a minute. Add the dissolved tomato paste, and bring to a simmer.

3. Add the drained beans, the remaining water, the bouquet garni, herbes de Provence and salt and pepper... Stir in the kale, bring to a simmer, cover and place in the oven. Bake three hours until the beans are tender and creamy. Taste and adjust salt.

4. Mix together the remaining olive oil and the bread crumbs. Sprinkle the bread crumbs over the beans and continue to bake for another 30 minutes to an hour until the bread crumbs are lightly browned. Remove from the heat and serve.

Note: Make sure the beans come to a simmer on top of the stove before placing them in the oven.

Try making bread crumbs from Ezekiel sprouted grain bread for an even healthier dish.

Beans, Beans, they're Good for your Heart.... "The Magical Fruit" of our schoolyard rhymes may not be a true fruit, but they are magical none the less. Beans are highly nutritious, tasty and inexpensive. In fact, they are now widely regarded as a "super food". Loaded with protein, fiber, antioxidants, and key nutrients such as iron and folic acid, regular

consumption of beans may provide protection from heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

Tips

- Darker beans tote more antioxidants; black beans and red kidney beans are some of the best.
- Including beans in our meals is easy. They make a delicious contribution to soups, chili, salads, burritos/ wraps, and casseroles. A big pot of lentil soup simmering on the stove-top is so comforting on a chilly winter evening.
- Make your own hummus: puree one can chickpeas with garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, tahini, salt and pepper. Adjust proportions to taste. Enjoy as a dip for for veggies, salad topper or a healthy sandwich spread.
- Garbanzo bean (chickpea) flour works as a healthy gluten-free substitute for whole-wheat flour in many recipes.

Warm your home with **Slow-Cooked Baked Beans with Kale**