

PASTA E FAGIOLI

Prep. Time: 30 mins	Cook Time: 30 mins	Serves: 6
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- 3 T olive oil, divided
- 1 lb Italian sausage (sweet or hot)
- 1 ½ c chopped onion
- 2 c carrots, chopped
- 1 c celery, chopped
- 3 T minced garlic
- 4 oz Applewood smoked bacon, diced
- 4 c chicken broth
- 1 c WC Sangiovese
- 3 (8 oz) cans tomato sauce
- 1 (15 oz) can diced tomatoes
- 1 (15 oz) dark red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 (15 oz) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 bay leaves
- 3/4 t dried thyme
- 1 1/2 t dried basil
- 1/2 t dried rosemary
- 1 t dried oregano
- 1/2 t dried marjoram
- 1/2 t red pepper flakes
- 1/2 t salt
- 1/2 t cracked black pepper
- 1 c ditalini dried pasta salt, cracked black pepper, red pepper flakes to taste
- grated Parmesan (optional)
- Italian parsley, chopped (optional)



DIRECTIONS

1. Heat 2 T olive oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Add crumbled sausage and cook, stirring occasionally until cooked through. Drain the fat from the sausage and set the meat aside.
2. Heat remaining olive oil and add the onions, carrots, and celery. Saute' over medium-high heat until tender, about 4 min.
3. Reduce the heat and add garlic. Cook 1 more minute.
4. Add bacon and cook until slightly brown, about 10 minutes, stirring often to scrape the pan bottom.
5. Add chicken broth, tomato sauce, tomatoes, wine, beans, spices, and cooked sausage. Mix well. If you like a thinner soup, add more broth.
6. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and allow to simmer for 30 min. Add more salt, ground black pepper or red pepper flakes, to taste.
7. In the meantime, cook the pasta according to directions for al dente. (I suggest adding the pasta to the individual bowls when serving. Adding it to the soup makes the pasta gummy.)
8. To serve, add 1/2 to 1 c pasta (depending on bowl size) to the bottom of each bowl. Ladle the soup on top. Top with Parmesan cheese, parsley, and more red pepper flakes, if desired. I serve the soup with a salad and warm crusty bread. And don't forget the Westcave Sangiovese!

NOTES

1. This soup can easily be made vegetarian by omitting the sausage and bacon. You may need to amp up the seasoning, though.
2. It is always better the next day or two after the flavors have time to meld.
3. The soup freezes well, but don't include the pasta.

