

slow cooker bean soup at altitude
makes 5+ quarts of soup

12 servings

I used a 6.5 quart slow cooker and a full-size microwave. You'll need a large (2 quart-plus), microwave-safe container with lid or an 8-cup glass measuring cup covered tightly with plastic wrap — or even a plate, though you then might have a little clean up...

- 1 pound dry white beans—northern or navy
- Water
- Kosher salt
- Fresh ground black pepper
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, very finely-minced
- 3 each carrots and celery stalks, diced
- 1 tablespoon Herbes de Provence (or a mixture of dried rosemary, thyme, oregano and basil)=
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 quart of water
- 1/2 cup white wine, optional
- 15-ounce can chopped tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- Handful of chopped fresh parsley
- 1 large smoked ham hock (have butcher cut in half if possible)+
- 2 cups sliced kielbasa, optional
- Hot sauce (a few drops in slow cooker and passed at the table)

1. Soak sorted* beans, 1 tablespoon kosher salt, and a few grinds of black pepper overnight in water that just covers beans. Alternately, bring them to a boil for five minutes, cover, and let sit one or more hours. Drain.

2. Place drained beans in a microwave-safe container with a quart or so of water seasoned with a few grinds of black pepper. Cover and microwave on high for one hour, stirring once half-way through cooking. (Caution: very hot.) Use heavy mitts or potholders to carefully remove container from microwave. Drain.

3. Add beans to slow cooker with onion, garlic, carrots, celery, herbs, chicken stock, water, white wine, tomatoes, tomato paste, parsley, ham hocks, kielbasa (if using) and hot sauce. Stir in 1 teaspoon kosher salt and 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper. Mix well.

4. Cook on low for 8-9 hours or until beans are tender. Remove ham hocks, let cool briefly and slice off meat. Chop the meat, discarding gristle and bone, and return to the pot. If you like your soup thicker, remove 2-3 cups of soup and puree carefully in the food processor, blender, or using an immersion blender. Return the blended portion of soup to the slow cooker. Taste and re-season as necessary. Serve hot with corn bread—recipe below, if needed. Place a bottle of hot sauce on the table for those that like spicier soup.

*Sorted: Check dry beans thoroughly for stones or other inedible materials before cooking.

=You can also use a bay leaf or two in place of these dried herbs if that is more appealing to you.

+You can use smoked pork chops, a ham bone, a cut-up ham steak, or chopped leftover ham, too. Even a few slices of diced bacon will work.

alyce's corn bread—gluten or gluten-free

*makes one 9"inch cast iron pan (can use 9" baking pan if necessary)
8-10 servings*

- 5 tablespoons butter, divided (1/4 cup or 4 tablespoons for batter; 1 tablespoon to grease pan)
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tablespoon finely minced onion
- 1 cup white or yellow cornmeal, stone-ground if possible
- 1 cup unbleached white flour or basic gluten-free baking mix such as King Arthur's**
- 1/4 cup white, granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper

- 1 Pre heat oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit (205 Celsius). Place rack at center.
- 2 Melt 4 tablespoons of the butter and set aside.
- 3 Heat a 9" cast iron skillet (23 Le Creuset) on the stove top over low flame with the 1 tablespoon of remaining butter. (*If using a baking pan, simply grease the pan.*) Tilt and tip skillet from side to side to coat the entire pan with a film of butter. Remove from heat if butter begins to burn.
- 4 In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, onion, and reserved melted butter. Set aside.
- 5 In a large bowl, mix well the dry ingredients (cornmeal – pepper). Pour milk mixture into dry ingredients and mix until just barely combined.
- 6 Pour batter into hot skillet or greased pan. I let the pan sit there a minute or two. Using

- hot pad for skillet, carefully move skillet to oven center rack.
- 7 Bake about twenty minutes or until bread is golden brown with crispy edges and a toothpick inserted at center comes out clean. Serve hot with honey and butter. Wrap leftovers carefully and store at room temperature for one-two days or up to one week in the refrigerator. (Good crumbled in milk for breakfast.)
- **If making gluten-free cornbread, add 2 tablespoons extra cornmeal to the mixture.

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