

Michael's Magic Bowtie Soup

(My adaptation of Michael's adaptation of Tuscan Bean Soup)

This is a delicious, nourishing and sustaining soup, and very economic to make. I use dried beans (Waitrose "10 Bean Mix" just £1.19 for a 500g bag), although the original recipe was for a 14oz/400g tin of Cannellini White Beans, which wouldn't need the initial preparation. As a main, this serves 3-4.

Ingredients

125g Dried Mixed Beans 30p
1 tbsp Olive or similar Oil (I use Rice Oil)
1 finely chopped Onion 42p *organic*
1 large finely chopped Carrot 20p *organic*
[1 crushed clove of Garlic - I don't like garlic so I leave this out but I do add a pinch of Garlic Salt]
1 tsp dried Oregano 3p
1 tsp dried Mixed Herbs 25p
14oz/400g can of whole Tomatoes, chopped (cheaper than buying chopped!) 84p *organic*
1 litre of hot vegetable stock
(I save the water from steaming previous nights' veg, top it up as necessary to make a litre, heat in the microwave and add a Knorr Vegetable Stock Pot; it adds 25p to the cost but is worth it.)
50g-75g Dried Farfalle Pasta, pre-lightly cooked (or 100g Fresh Pasta) 15p
Generous handful of loosely chopped washed fresh Spinach per portion 30p *pp* / 90p
Seasoning to taste

Bean Prep - start the night before

Wash the beans in plenty of fresh cold water using a colander. Place in a lidded saucepan or bowl, cover with plenty more fresh cold water, and leave to soak overnight. After soaking for at least 12 hours, rinse again in plenty of fresh cold water. Place in a lidded saucepan, and cover with plenty of fresh cold water. Bring rapidly to the boil for 10 minutes, then reduce the heat and allow to simmer for around 1 hour 15 minutes, or until tender.

Soup Prep

- Lightly cook the pasta and set aside
- Chop the onion and carrot [and garlic if used]
- Open the tinned tomatoes and chop the whole tomatoes
- Measure out and mix the herbs [and garlic salt] in a small dish
- Loosely chop a handful of fresh spinach
- Heat the vegetable stock

To make the soup

- Heat the olive oil in a very large saucepan and cook the onion and carrot for 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently.
- Add the garlic and herbs, and cook for a further minute.
- Pour in the tomatoes and stock, and add the pasta and the beans.
- Cook with the lid at an angle for 8 minutes

- If you're making the soup to eat straight away, then add three handfuls of the chopped spinach and cook for a further 2 minutes. However I find this quantity will do me at least three very good sized meals, and so I put aside all but the amount I'm eating there and then, and add one handful of spinach to that.
- Season to taste.