

White Bean and Spinach Soup

1 pound dried white beans
 8 cups water, divided
 8 cups beef broth, either homemade or canned
 2 cups fresh carrots, grated
 1 ½ cups onion, chopped
 4 cloves garlic, minced
 1 teaspoon fresh thyme or ½ teaspoon dried thyme
 3 bay leaves
 ¼ teaspoon pepper
 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
 6 cups fresh spinach, torn
 2 16-ounce cans tomatoes, coarsely chopped
 ½ teaspoon granulated sugar
 ½ teaspoon salt (omit if using canned broth)

Soak beans in cups of water overnight in a large saucepan. Drain soaking water and add beef broth and 4 cups of fresh water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat. Add carrots, onions, garlic, thyme, bay leaves, and black and cayenne peppers. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, then cover and simmer for 1 hour or until beans are tender. Add spinach, tomatoes with liquid, sugar, and salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Ladle into soup bowls. Makes 8 servings.

Approx. per serving: 240 calories; 2 grams of fat.



Black Bean Dip

1 15 ounce can black beans, drained
 ½ cup fat-free mayonnaise
 ½ cup fat-free sour cream
 1 clove garlic, mashed
 1 4-ounce can chopped green chili peppers
 1 teaspoon chili powder
 1 tablespoon salt

Mash the black beans in a bowl well with a fork. Add mayonnaise, sour cream, garlic, chilies, chili powder, and salt. Stir well. Cover and refrigerate for one hour before serving. Makes 8 servings.

Approx. per serving: 70 calories; 0 grams of fat.

Three Bean Casserole

2 onions, finely chopped
 2 green bell peppers, chopped
 1 cup celery, chopped
 3 16-ounce cans of your favorite beans (lima, pinto, red, etc.)
 3 cans whole tomatoes
 Pinch garlic powder
 1 teaspoon vinegar
 2 cups reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
 1 tablespoon barbecue sauce

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cook onion, bell pepper and celery in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Pour into a large pot. Add beans, tomatoes, garlic powder and vinegar and simmer for 30 minutes. Pour mixture into baking dish and layer with cheddar cheese. Sprinkle a dash of barbecue sauce on top. Bake in oven just until cheese has melted. Makes 8 servings.

Approx. per serving: 335 calories; 3 grams of fat.