



Vellutata di Cannellini *a modo mio* **(Velvety cannellini bean soup *my way*)**

This is my version of a Tuscan bean soup classic. The beans are blended until a velvety texture is achieved.

Prepping the beans (The beans can be used for many recipes. Make the whole bag and freeze what you don't need right away.)

- Soak a bag of dry cannellini beans in water overnight.
- Drain and put cannellini in a pot. Cover with water, about an inch over beans.
- Add to pot a couple cloves of garlic, a few sage leaves, some black peppercorns and a little olive oil.
- Bring to a boil then simmer for about an hour until the beans are cooked *al dente*.
- The beans now can be put in the fridge in the broth and will last a few days. (If longer freeze.)

For four appetizer portions served in a martini glass

Ingredients

- 3 cups of prepped cannellini out of the broth. Discard the pepper, sage and garlic.
- Some of the cannellini broth
- A sprig of rosemary
- 4 large basil leaves
- One slice of soft bread, no crust. Toast is fine.
- Half a lemon
- Peperoncino (chili pepper) as you like
- ¼ cup of passata (tomato purée)

- Olive oil, salt and pepper as needed
- 16 small fried crusty-bread croutons
- 4 fried pancetta wheels or ¼ cup of diced fried pancetta (bacon)
- Lemon zest and parsley

Directions

- Chop up some pancetta into ¼ inch cubes and fry until crisp. (Or, you could fry discs of pancetta arrotolata.)
- Fry some small cubes of crusty bread in olive oil until golden.
- Put the beans in a bowl.
- Add rosemary, basil leaves, soft bread, olive oil, lemon juice, a little peperoncino, and the passata di pomodoro.
- Blend with a hand blender and add some of the broth until you achieve a nice velvety consistency (“vellutata”).
- Taste and add salt, lemon, olive oil, spices until it is to your liking.
- Put in a pot and keep warm on the stove.
- Put a few croutons on the bottom of the martini glasses
- Add the vellutata and drizzle a little of your best finishing oil on top.
- Sprinkle a little coarse black pepper.
- Decorate with either the cubes or the disc of pancetta.
- Add a tiny curly lemon zest and a floret of fresh parsley.
- Top with a few whole cannellini beans and enjoy.