

Tomato, White Bean, and Sorrel Soup (“Fields of Greens” Annie Somerville)

The sorrel will lose its bright green color as soon as it's heated, but overlook the faded hue; it's the lemony sorrel flavor that makes this soup so distinctive.

1 cup dried white beans, about 6 ounces, sorted and soaked overnight
6 cups cold water
1 bay leaf
1 fresh marjoram sprig
2 fresh sage leaves
2 fresh thyme sprigs
1 Tbsp light olive oil
1 medium-size yellow onion, diced, about 2 cups
salt and pepper
¼ tsp dried thyme
1 medium-size carrot, diced, about ¾ cup
6 garlic cloves, finely chopped
½ cup dry sherry
2 lbs fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and pureed, about 3 cups
30 fresh sorrel leaves, stems removed, bundled together and thinly sliced across bundle, about 2 cups
sugar
2 Tbsp chopped fresh herbs: parsley, marjoram, and thyme
grated Parmesan, Gruyere, or Asiago cheese

Rinse and drain the beans. Place them in a medium-size saucepan with the water, bay leaf, and fresh herbs. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to medium and simmer, uncovered, until the beans are tender, 25 to 30 minutes. It's fine if they're soft and breaking down. Leave the cooked beans in their broth until you're ready to add them to the soup.

While the beans are cooking, heat the olive oil in a soup pot; add the onion, ½ tsp salt, a pinch of pepper, and the dried thyme. Saute over medium heat until the onion begins to soften, about 5 to 7 minutes. Add the carrots and sauté until tender, about 5 minutes, then add the garlic and sauté for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the sherry and cook for 1 to 2 minutes, until the pan is almost dry.

Add the tomatoes to the onion and carrots with ½ tsp salt and cook for about 10 minutes. Add the beans and their broth, the sorrel, and ½ tsp salt. Cover and cook over low heat for 30 minutes. If the soup needs body, puree ½ cup of the cooked beans in some of their broth, then return into the soup. You may need to thin it with a little water or stock. Add more salt and pepper to taste, then add a few pinches of sugar to balance the flavors if the soup is acidic. Stir in the fresh herbs just before serving. Garnish each serving with a generous spoonful of cheese.