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Lemon Chicken, White Bean & Vegetable Soup

Serves 4 · Prep 15 minutes · Cook about 35 minutes



Ingredients

- 1–1¼ lb boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts
- 2 cans (15 oz each) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 1 medium zucchini, diced
- 4–5 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 large handfuls fresh baby spinach
- 5 cups chicken broth, preferably low-sodium
- 1–2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 bay leaf
- Pinch of red pepper flakes, optional
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1–2 tbsp fresh lemon juice, to taste
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill or parsley
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Optional: Parmesan rind for extra flavor

Method

1. Season the chicken with salt and pepper. Sear in 1 tbsp olive oil over medium-high heat, about 3 minutes per side, then set aside.
2. Sauté the onion, carrots, and celery over medium heat for 8–10 minutes until softened and lightly golden.
3. Stir in the garlic, thyme, oregano, and red pepper flakes; cook 30 seconds until fragrant.
4. Deglaze with a splash of broth, scraping up the browned bits. Add the remaining broth, bay leaf, chicken, and optional Parmesan rind; bring to a gentle simmer.
5. Simmer until the chicken reaches 165°F (12–15 min for breasts, 15–20 for thighs). Remove and shred with two forks.
6. Add the beans and zucchini; simmer 5–7 minutes. Mash some beans against the pot for a creamier broth.
7. Return the chicken, add the spinach, and stir until wilted. Remove the bay leaf and Parmesan rind.
8. Off the heat, add the lemon zest, lemon juice, and dill or parsley. Adjust salt, pepper, and lemon to taste.

Kitchen tip: don’t skip browning the chicken or sautéing the vegetables — those layers of flavor make all the difference.