

Ruth's Bean and Barley Soup

6 servings

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- 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion sliced thinly into strips
- 1 Tablespoon pre-crushed garlic
- 3 leaves fresh basil, chopped finely
- 1 15-ounce can of white or pinto beans, rinsed and separated into half
- 1 14.5-ounce can of petite diced tomatoes
- 6 cups vegetable broth
- 1 5.5 ounce can vegetable or tomato juice
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fast-cooking barley
- 6 cups of fresh, clean spinach

In a large pot, sauté the onions and seasonings in the oil until the onions are limp and lightly browned

Mash one half of the beans and add them all to the sautéed seasonings, along with the tomatoes, vegetable broth, juice and barley. Bring it all to a boil. Then turn down heat and simmer for 15 minutes (or as directed on the barley package) until the barley is tender. Just before serving, rip spinach leaves in half and toss into the pot, stirring for 1 minute, until wilted.

Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Serve with parmesan cheese or sour cream, if desired.