

## Florentine White Bean Soup

1 cup dry or 2 cups cooked navy beans  
8 oz. Spinach noodles (optional)  
1 small zucchini, cut into half moons  
1 onion, diced  
1 carrot, cut into matchsticks  
4 to 8 oz. spinach, fresh or frozen, chopped  
Pinch of oregano or other herb  
Salt to taste or 2 to 3 tablespoons white or light miso (optional)

If using dry beans cook until tender but not mushy; drain beans. If canned beans are not “low sodium,” they should be drained and rinsed. Cook noodles until *al dente*. Drain and run cold water over the noodles to prevent further cooking. In a large soup pot, layer all vegetables except spinach. Add water to cover and simmer 10 minutes. Add beans, noodles, and oregano to vegetables. Simmer 10 minutes. Before serving, add salt or miso and chopped spinach. Heat until spinach wilts. For a creamy version blend the soup just before adding the spinach.

**Serves 4 to 6.** *Per serving (without salt): 218 calories, .5 gram fat, 40 grams carbohydrate, 50 grams sodium, 0 mg cholesterol, 5 grams fiber.*

Adapted from *Natural Foods Cookbook* by Mary Estella.

This soup definitely has that comfort food quality to it. It’s easy to prepare and can be rounded out with garlic toast and a tossed salad for a delicious winter meal. Unless you are a fan of Japanese food you probably are not familiar with miso. It is a paste that is rich in flavor and is used much like bouillon. Miso is a fermented food which contains enzymes and beneficial bacteria that support your digestive system. Typically miso is made from soybeans, grain, and salt. My families’ favorite variety of miso is one made from chickpeas (garbanzo beans). Watch your portion size just as you would with salt or bouillon. Miso is reputed in the Far East to promote health and longevity. Most health food stores carry miso.

Your Partners in Health,  
**Candace and Lesley**