



Gigante Beans

serves 4

- 4-6 ounces pancetta or bacon (a ham hock is also nice)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, peeled and diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large carrot, peeled and diced
- 1/2 pound gigante beans
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 quart chicken stock
- salt to taste

Soak beans overnight in cold water to cover. Or cover with 2 inches of boiling water and soak for 4 hours minimum. Drain beans and discard soaking liquid. In a Dutch oven or soup pot over medium heat, warm olive oil and sauté pancetta or bacon until brown, then add onion, garlic, celery and carrot, stirring well and cooking until golden.

Add beans and bay leaf and stir to coat. Pour in stock and bring briefly to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook, partially covered, until beans are soft, about 1 hour. (Time varies greatly depending on the size and age of your beans.) If you prefer your beans soupier, add more stock as it begins to be absorbed.

Serve beans warm or at room temperature with a drizzle of olive oil and a generous sprinkle of crunchy sea salt, or swirl in a couple of spoonfuls of parsley-rosemary pistou.