

Linguine with Onions and Cannellini Beans

serves 6

This is a combination of an onion and garlic sauce my mom used to make and a cannellini bean sauce prepared by a friend. This is one of my favorites; it is delicious, simple food.

1 lb. linguine	1 1/2 tsp. salt
1 T. salt	1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
3 T. extra virgin olive oil	1 tsp. dried basil
4 cups onions, very thin half moon slices	1/2 cup pasta cooking water
5 cloves garlic	1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
2 T. white wine	
3 cups cooked cannellini beans; substitute Great Northern if cannellini beans are unavailable (3 cups is 2 cans pre-cooked beans or 1 1/2 cups cooked dried beans)	

Fill a 6-quart pot with 4 quarts of water; cover and bring to a boil. Add 1 T. salt to pasta water. Meanwhile, heat the olive oil in a large frying pan on medium high heat. Add the onions and cook until they are completely transparent and beginning to brown, about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. To develop their full sweetness and depth of flavor, they want to turn a medium brown color without burning. Stir only occasionally, and when they are really beginning to stick, add the wine in little drizzles and loosen the stuck bits with your spoon (the stuck bits are called the *fond* and are highly desired).

When the onions are nice and brown, add the beans, salt, pepper, and basil and stir well. Cook on medium heat, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, 5–10 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook the linguine in the boiling water until tender. Boil vigorously throughout the entire cooking time. Right before draining, scoop out 1/2 cup cooking liquid and add to the onions and beans. Drain the pasta, letting some of the cooking liquid cling to the noodles. Dump into a large bowl, pour the cannellini and onion sauce over, and stir well. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese evenly over the top and serve. Pass a pepper mill and a cruet of aged balsamic vinegar at the table. Serve with blanched broccoli with olive oil and garlic, crusty Italian bread with extra virgin olive oil for dipping, and a light and refreshing watercress salad. Savor the sweet, satisfying flavor and aroma of this meal!