

## Zuppe di fagioli e cozze (White Bean Soup with Mussels)

For the beans:

- 1 pound dried white beans, soaked overnight
- 2 yellow onions, chopped
- 5 cloves garlic, smashed
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups peeled, seeded, and chopped tomatoes (I only **CHOPPED!**)
- Salt

To prepare the beans, drain them, transfer to a large saucepan, and add water to cover by about 3 inches. Add the onions, garlic, bay leaf, and tomatoes and bring to a gentle boil over medium heat. Reduce the heat to low, add 2 teaspoons salt, and simmer gently, uncovered, until the beans are tender, about 1 hour. You don't want them to be mushy, so check for doneness after about 45 minutes.

Set aside for a few hours or refrigerate overnight.

- ¼ c. olive oil
- 2 yellow onions, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ t. chili flakes (optional)
- 2/3 c. dry white wine
- 36 mussels (about a pound and a half)
- Fish stock, only if needed
- 1-2 T. chopped fresh tarragon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 T. chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

In a wide sauté pan, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and sauté until softened, about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and the chili pepper flakes and cook for 2 minutes longer. Pour in the wine, add the mussels, raise the heat to high, and bring to a boil. Cover and cook until the mussels open, which should take only a few minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and lift the mussels from the pan, reserving the contents of the pan. Discard any mussels that fail to open. When the mussels are cool enough to handle, remove them from their shells, holding them over a bowl as you work to catch all of the juices.

Reheat the beans to serving temperature. Add the mussels, the onion mixture in which they were cooked, and the captured juices to the beans and stir to mix. If the soup is too thick, add a little fish stock. Simmer for a few minutes to heat all the ingredients thoroughly.

Add the tarragon to taste, and season with salt and pepper. Ladle the soup into warmed bowls, sprinkle evenly with the parsley and serve at once.