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Greek Bean Soup

Dried beans are packed with protein and rich in fiber. They're versatile, low in calories and fat, and may help lower cholesterol. Try them in this healthful soup, based on the creation of the chef at Molyvos, a New York City Greek restaurant. It features lima beans blended with onions, leek, baby spinach and just a sprinkling of feta cheese.

Greek Lima Bean Soup

- 1 cup dried giant lima beans
- 1 cup chopped red onion
- 1 large leek, white part only, chopped
- 2 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 2 cups cold water
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups packed baby spinach
- 4 Tbsp. crumbled feta cheese
- 4 tsp. extra virgin olive oil, optional for garnish

In bowl, soak beans in cold water until skins are wrinkled and most beans have split open, 3-4 hours. Drain beans.

Place soaked beans in small Dutch oven or deep, large saucepan. Add onion, leek and broth. Pour in 2 cups cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, until beans are soft, about 1 hour.

Remove pot from heat. With immersion blender, whirl until half the beans are puréed. Or pour half the soup into blender and whirl, then pour puréed soup back into pot. Season soup to taste with salt and pepper. Return pot to medium heat and cook, stirring soup frequently, until almost boiling. Mix in spinach, stirring until it wilts, 3-4 minutes.

To serve, divide soup among 4 bowls. Spoon 1 tablespoon feta cheese into center of each bowl. If using, drizzle 1 teaspoon oil over soup.

Makes 4 servings.

Per serving: 254 calories, 7 g total fat (2 g saturated fat), 36 g carbohydrate, 14 g protein, 10 g dietary fiber, 407 mg sodium.

