

Creamy Italian Bean and Parmesan Soup

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There's nothing more comforting than a big pot of soup simmering away on the stove, especially when it's creamy, hearty, and packed with flavor. This **Creamy Italian Bean and Parmesan Soup with Spinach** is one of those recipes you'll want to keep on repeat. It's simple, nourishing, and comes together in under an hour – perfect for busy weeknights or cozy weekends at home.

The creamy base gets its richness from Parmesan and a touch of milk, while cannellini beans make it extra hearty. Fresh spinach stirred in at the end adds a pop of color and a boost of nutrition. Serve it with warm crusty bread, and you've got a comforting meal that feels rustic and homemade, just the way Italian food should.

Things to Know about this creamy Italian bean and parmesan soup

- **Beans:** Cannellini beans are classic in Italian soups, but you can swap them with Great Northern or navy beans if that's what you have on hand.
- **Parmesan rind:** Don't skip this if you have one! It adds incredible depth and savoriness. If you don't, just add a little extra grated Parmesan at the end.
- **Milk or cream:** Whole milk makes this soup creamy without

being too heavy, but half-and-half or even a splash of cream will give it extra richness.

- **Spinach substitute:** Kale, Swiss chard, or even arugula work beautifully if you want to mix it up. Just adjust the cooking time so greens are tender but still vibrant.
- **Blending tip:** Only blending half the soup gives you the best of both worlds – creaminess and texture. If you like it super smooth, blend the whole pot.
- **Serving suggestions:** Crusty bread is a must, but you can also top the soup with garlic croutons, a drizzle of olive oil, or extra shaved Parmesan.
- **Storage:** This soup keeps well in the fridge for up to 3 days. Reheat gently on the stove, adding a splash of broth or milk if it thickens. Avoid freezing if you've used milk or cream, as the texture may change.
- If you love cozy Italian soups like this one, you'll want to try my **Creamy Sausage Tortellini Soup** next. And for a classic favorite, don't miss my comforting **Pasta e Fagioli** – perfect for keeping warm on chilly days!

Ingredients

• Creamy Italian Bean and Parmesan Soup

Ingredients (Serves 4–6)

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 carrots, diced

- 2 celery stalks, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 14 oz. can crushed tomatoes
- 2 cans (15 oz each) cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 cup whole milk or half-and-half
- 1 Parmesan rind (optional, for depth of flavor)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese, plus extra for serving
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 cups fresh spinach, roughly chopped
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped (for garnish)

Instructions

1. **Sauté the base:** In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Cook until softened, about 6–7 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook 1 more minute. Add the crushed tomatoes cook 5 minutes longer
2. **Add beans and broth:** Stir in beans, oregano, thyme, bay leaf, and Parmesan rind (if using). Pour in the broth and bring to a simmer. Cook uncovered for 15–20 minutes.

3. **Blend for creaminess:** Remove bay leaf and rind. Use an immersion blender to puree about half the soup, leaving some beans whole. (Or transfer a few cups to a blender and return to pot.)
4. **Finish with Parmesan & milk:** Stir in milk (or half-and-half) and Parmesan. Simmer gently for 5 minutes, stirring often, until creamy.
5. **Add spinach:** Stir in spinach and cook just until wilted, about 2 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.
6. **Serve:** Ladle into bowls, garnish with fresh parsley and extra Parmesan, and serve with warm bread.