

Pasta e Fagioli (Pasta Bean Soup)

1 small fennel bulb, untrimmed
1 tsp. olive oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
2 oz. whole wheat medium-sized pasta; wagon wheels or rotini (1/2 cup)
1 1/2 cups reduced sodium spicy vegetable juice
1 14.5 oz can fire-roasted diced or crushed tomatoes, undrained
1 15 or 16 oz can no-salt-added navy beans, drained
1/2 cup frozen peas
1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes (optional)
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cut off and reserve 2 tablespoons feathery fennel fronds for garnish. Chop enough fennel bulb to yield 1 cup. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped fennel; cook 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in garlic; cook 1 minute. Add broth and pasta; then bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered 5 minutes.

2. Stir in vegetable juice, diced tomatoes, beans, peas, and if desired, pepper flakes. Return to a simmer; cook 10 minutes or until pasta and fennel are tender, stirring occasionally. Ladle into shallow bowls; top with fennel fronds and feta cheese. Makes 4 servings, 1 1/2 cups each.

Tips and Substitutions: Chicken broth may replace the vegetable broth. Cannellini or great northern beans may replace the navy beans, and goat cheese may replace the feta cheese.

Per serving: Calories - 208
Total fat - 9g
Cholesterol - 25mg
Saturated fat - 4.5g
Polyunsaturated fat - 0.4g
Monounsaturated fat - 2g
Fiber - 10.6g
Carbohydrates - 43g
Protein - 14.5g
Sodium - 768mg

Source: Whole Grains Council

