

Dried Bean or Lentil Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 cups dried beans or lentils
- 2 ½ quarts water
- Ham bone (with or without meat)
- 1 large carrot, sliced
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 2 or 3 stems of celery, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- Freshly ground pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 tablespoons sherry (optional)
- Chopped parsley
- 8 slices bacon, fried crisp and crumbled

Soak the beans overnight in the water (if you haven't thought of it early enough, boil the beans in the water for a few minutes then soak them for an hour or more before cooking). Put everything but the parsley and bacon bits into the pot and bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer the batch for about 3 hours, stirring occasionally. Add more water if you think it needs it. Puree everything in a blender or food processor or press through a sieve – it must be smoooooooooooooth. Reheat. I poured mine into my tureen and sprinkled bacon bits and parsley on top.

From Edna Staebler's *"Schmecks Appeal: More Mennonite Country Cooking"* (2002).