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# Creamy Lima Beans & Greens Soup

NATURALLY DELICIOUS RECIPES • Janice Feuer-Haugen

**N**aturally Creamy Lima Beans and Greens Soup may become your go-to cold weather soup. Relatively quick cooking large limas (1 hour pre-soak and 1 hour cooking time) make a deeply nurturing, rich and flavorful broth. Once cooked, the large limas become unbelievably tender and creamy. Spinach, kale, chard or other greens bring color and nutrition. The optional sprinkling of grated Pecorino Romano, or crumbled soft goat cheese and/or a dollop of pesto make a flavorful garnish.

## Give Large Limas a Try!

If you grew up as I did only knowing frozen green lima beans, it may be an understatement to say that limas may not be your favorite beans. Though, do give these dried large limas a try. Being both buttery in texture and rich and savory in flavor, they are known as butter beans in the U.K. and Southern U.S.

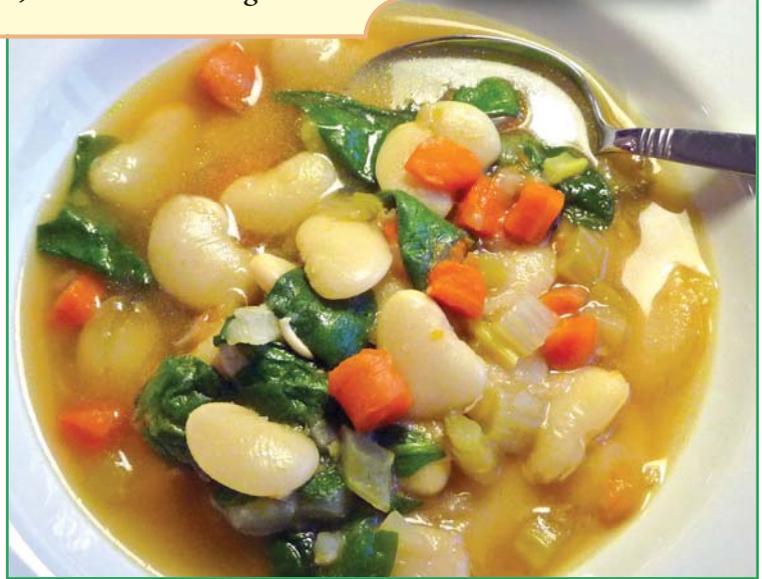
And, limas, like all beans, are versatile, affordable and nutrient and mineral rich. They are high in antioxidants, fiber, protein, B vitamins, iron, potassium, magnesium, copper and zinc. Regularly eating beans has been shown to decrease the risk of heart disease and some cancers. Due to their rich fiber and protein content they have also been found to help in weight loss and managing diabetes.

## Required: Cook Your Own Beans

When making a bean soup, there is no comparison with the luscious broth from cooking your own beans, versus using water or stock and beans from a can. To create a smooth, full-bodied and richly flavored broth you've got to cook your own beans.

## Kombu, Member of the Kelp Family

Dried kombu is often used to flavor broth, as in dashi, the essential stock used in Japanese cooking.



Many cooks add a 4–6-inch piece of dried kombu to beans while they cook. The kombu adds minerals and helps soften the beans, making them more digestible. The kombu is optional, although a valuable addition.

## Get Creative!

Use this recipe as a template for almost unlimited variations on this classic combination of beans and greens depending on your mood and what's in your pantry.

- Change up the greens. Depending on the greens you use, be sure to allow enough time to thoroughly cook them. Whereas spinach, watercress, Swiss chard and baby kale cook quickly, cabbage and mature kale might take 5–8 minutes, depending on how thick or thin you slice them.
- Change up the beans. Try any of the varieties of white beans. Consider garbanzos as well as the lentil varieties that maintain their shape such as black Beluga and du Puy.
- NOTE: Quick cooking lentils require no presoaking. Most other beans benefit from the quick soak method I've provided in the recipe. That presoak assures a

faster cooking time and uniformly tender beans.

- Change up the herbs and spices. Create a Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, Asian, Mexican profile through the use of different herbs (cilantro, mint, basil, oregano, lemon grass, etc.) and spices (cumin, coriander, fennel, ginger, dried chilies, turmeric, curry powder, etc). ■

do not need to be cut. Mature greens need to be removed from their stem. The stems, other than spinach stems, cut into ¼-inch rounds, the greens cut in half and then into 1-inch wide strips.

## CREAMY LIMA BEANS & GREENS SOUP

*Vegan. Gluten-Free. Dairy-Free (without the cheese garnish).*

*Makes 15 cups*

*Active Time: 40 minutes*

*Total Time: 2 ½ hours, including 1 hour for presoaking the limas*

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound large lima beans
- 1 4-inch piece kombu, optional
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 8 cups water
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cups ¼-inch diced onion
- 1 ½ cups ½-inch diced carrot
- 1 ½ cups ½-inch diced celery
- 2 large cloves garlic, peeled, minced or pressed with a garlic press
- 2 4-inch sprigs of fresh rosemary
- 2 bay leaves
- 9 cups water
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 dozen twists freshly ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce or tamari, optional
- 4 packed cups kale, spinach or mixed greens. Baby greens



### OPTIONAL GARNISH

Add grated Pecorino Romano cheese, or crumbled, soft goat cheese and/or your favorite pesto.

### DIRECTIONS

**1)** Rinse and drain the large limas. Place them in a soup pot with ¼ teaspoon salt, the optional kombu and 8 cups of water to cover the beans by about 1½ inches. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. Boil for 5 minutes. Cover the pot and turn off the heat. Let the beans sit at least 1 hour before draining and rinsing them.

**2)** Prepare each of the vegetables. Heat a large soup pot over medium heat. Cover the pot and cook the onion, carrot, celery and garlic over medium-low heat for 7 minutes.

**3)** Add the soaked, rinsed and drained beans to the pot along with the fresh rosemary and bay leaves. Add 9 cups of water to cover the beans and vegetables by 1 inch. Bring the water to a boil over high heat. Boil for 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium low, partially cover the soup pot and gently simmer the soup for 45 minutes.

**4)** Test 2 or 3 lima beans. They are done when soft and tender all

the way through. Stir in the salt, pepper and soy sauce if using it. If the beans still need cooking, give them another 15 minutes before checking again. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste.

**5)** When the beans are cooked, remove the rosemary sprigs, bay leaves and any remaining kombu. Though as the kombu that remains is quite tender, you may choose to leave it in the pot.

**6)** Stir in the greens. Spinach will wilt in a minute. Baby kale and sliced mature kale and stems take about 5 minutes to become tender.

**7)** Serve Creamy Lima Beans and Greens Soup garnished with the optional grated Pecorino Romano, or crumbled goat cheese and/or your favorite pesto.

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