

Tuscan White Bean Dip

Makes about 2 cups (8 appetizer servings)

2 (15-ounce) cans great Northern beans

1/4 cup minced shallots

1 1/2 tablespoons chopped garlic

2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon salt, or to taste

Several grinds black pepper, to taste

2 1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves

1 1/2 teaspoons dried rosemary leaves, crushed

3 tablespoons olive oil

Several sprigs fresh thyme and rosemary for garnish (optional)

1 thin loaf crusty sourdough bread, heated, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices

6 small Roma tomatoes, halved lengthwise

1. In a colander, rinse the beans under cold water to remove canning liquid. Drain well and pat dry.

2. In a food processor or blender, combine the beans, shallots, garlic, lemon juice, salt, pepper, dried thyme, dried rosemary and olive oil. Puree until fairly smooth, about 1 minute. Taste, and add more seasonings if desired.

3. Transfer the dip to a bowl. Cover and refrigerate. (Dip may be made up to 2 days before using.)

4. Serve at room temperature, garnished with sprigs of fresh thyme and rosemary. Place the bowl of dip on a tray and arrange bread and tomatoes around the bowl.

Per serving: 281 calories, 12 grams protein, 45 grams carbohydrates, 2 grams sugar, 6 grams fat, no cholesterol, 376 milligrams sodium.