

Pasta with White Bean Sauce

1/2 cup chopped onion
1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons butter
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1 1/2 cups milk
1/4 cup water
2 teaspoons chicken base or 2 chicken bouillon cubes
2 cups cooked white beans (such as Great Northern) or one 15-ounce can, drained and mashed*
1 1/2 cups (6 ounces) shredded Mozzarella or Monterrey Jack cheese
1/2 to 1 teaspoon salt (to taste)
Shredded Parmesan and/or fresh parsley, optional
8 ounces pasta, cooked according to package instructions

1. In a medium-large stock pot over medium heat, saute onion, cayenne, and black pepper in butter, until onion is soft. Add garlic and stir. Add the flour and stir to coat, until flour is bubbly.

2. Add the milk, water, and chicken base while whisking briskly. Continue to whisk and heat until mixture bubbles and thickens slightly.

3. Reduce heat and stir in beans, heating through. (See additional notes about blending the sauce for a smooth sauce.) Add cheese and stir until melted. Add salt to taste (we like about 1 teaspoon, but you may need less, especially if you started with canned beans!).

Serve hot sauce over freshly cooked pasta. Sprinkle with shredded Parmesan cheese or fresh parsley for garnish, if desired.

*You can leave the beans whole if you prefer a chunkier sauce, mash them with a potato masher prior to adding to the sauce, or puree the whole sauce with an immersion or regular blender. I did the immersion blender, and it worked wonderfully.