Lima Bean and Porcini Soup

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* YIELD8 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 large celery stalk, finely chopped

1 large carrot, unpeeled, finely chopped

1 large onion, finely chopped

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

 Salt to taste

½ pound dried lima beans, soaked overnight and drained

½ cup pearl barley

2 cans been broth

1 ham hock

1 cup diced smoked ham

¾ ounce dried porcini mushrooms

4 thyme sprigs

1 bay leaf

 Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1 tablespoon minced shallot

1 tablespoon chopped parsley

PREPARATION

In a soup pot, combine celery, carrot, onion, garlic, olive oil and salt. Cover and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes.

Soak porcini in hot water until soft. Drain saving the liquid. Chop porcini coarsely.

Add lima beans, barley, beef broth and enough water make 8 cups liquid, ham, porcini and its liquid, thyme and bay leaf, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, partially uncovered, until beans are tender, about 1 hour.

Discard thyme sprigs and bay leaf. Taste and add salt if needed. Ladle soup into bowls and season with pepper. Garnish with shallot and parsley, and serve.