



Rich in flavor and nutrition, Sarah's delicious Hearty Bean and Barley Salad with Jalapeno Vinaigrette is the perfect big-batch salad for gatherings with friends and family. Sarah Nasello / The Forum

Hearty Bean and Barley Salad with Jalapeno Vinaigrette

Serves: 8 to 10

Salad ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups pearly barley, fully cooked
- 3 to 4 cups water or chicken stock
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 can white beans (Great Northern, Navy or Cannellini), drained and rinsed
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2 bell peppers, red and/or orange, small diced (about ¼-inch)
- ½ cup red onion, finely chopped
- 1 large jalapeno, seeded and finely chopped (add more to taste)
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3 cups baby spinach leaves, roughly chopped

Jalapeno Vinaigrette ingredients:

- 2/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon cider vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime (about 3 tablespoons)
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon honey
1 jalapeno, seeded and finely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon fresh cilantro, finely chopped
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper

For a spicier vinaigrette, add:

¼ to ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional, for more heat)
4 to 5 dashes of hot sauce (like Tabasco)

Directions:

In a small bowl, add all of the vinaigrette ingredients and whisk vigorously until fully combined. Taste and add more seasoning as desired. Allow dressing to marinate at room temperature for 30 minutes before using or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 1 week. Whisk or shake vigorously before serving.

In a medium or large pot, bring the barley, water/stock and bay leaf to a boil over medium heat. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until the liquid is fully absorbed and the barley is al dente (tender with a slight crunch), about 45 to 50 minutes. Add more water if needed, ¼ cup at a time. Drain the barley in a strainer and discard the bay leaf. Rinse with cold water until cool to the touch.

In a large bowl, add the cooked barley, beans and extra-virgin olive oil. Use a rubber spatula or wooden spoon to gently toss until evenly coated. Add the remaining ingredients and the vinaigrette; stir until well combined. For best result, refrigerate the salad for at least 1 hour before serving, or even overnight.

To store: Keep salad in an airtight container and refrigerate for up to 3 days. If the salad appears a touch dry, drizzle a tablespoon or 2 of extra-virgin olive oil or vegetable oil over the salad to loosen it up before serving.

Advance prep:

- The barley can be cooked up to 2 days in advance of assembling the salad.
- The vinaigrette can be made up to 1 week in advance and refrigerated until ready to use.
- The salad can be assembled and dressed up to 24 hours in advance of serving, and leftovers will keep well for several days.

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"Home with the Lost Italian" is a weekly column written by Sarah Nasello featuring recipes by her husband, Tony Nasello. The couple owned Sarello's in Moorhead and lives in Fargo with their son, Giovanni. Readers can reach them at sarahnasello@gmail.com.