

### Pasta e Fagioli Soup

1 1/2 C small white beans (soaked overnight)  
8 oz spicy Italian sausage  
1 large chopped onion  
3 cloves minced garlic  
1 large finely chopped carrot  
2 T dried currants  
1 tsp dry basil  
1 1/2 C chicken broth  
3 C water  
1 can (14 1/2-oz) pear-shaped tomatoes  
1 C dry large shell-shaped pasta  
Grated Parmesan cheese

Sort beans, rinse well and drain. Set beans aside. Remove casings from sausage. Crumble meat into large chunks and put into 6 qt pan, Cook on high heat until lightly browned (3 to 5 minutes). Discard all but 2 T fat, Add onion, garlic, and carrot; cook, stirring often, until onion begins to soften, Add beans, currants, basil, broth and water.

Bring to a boil; reduce heat, cover and boil gently until beans are tender to bite (2 to 2 1/2 hours). Add tomatoes (break up with a spoon) and their liquid, then stir in pasta. Return to a boil; cover and boil gently until pasta is just tender to bite (about 12 minutes). Skim off and discard fat from soup. Serve with cheese and crusty bread.