

## Ham & Bean Soup

### *Serves six*

1 ham bone with some meat on it or a ham hock  
½ pound of dried beans of your choice – soaked overnight\* and drained  
4 to 5 sprigs of parsley  
2 small celery stalks with leaves  
4 to 5 sprigs of thyme  
2 small chili peppers – optional  
2 bay leaves  
½ an onion – coarsely chopped  
5 garlic cloves – peeled and smashed  
8 cups of water  
2 carrots – peeled and sliced  
2 cups cubed squash  
1 TBS honey  
1 TBS Balsamic vinegar  
1 TBS lemon juice  
Chopped parsley for garnish

Place the ham bone or ham hock in a pot with the beans, parsley, celery, thyme, chili peppers, bay leaves, onion, garlic and water. Cover, bring to a boil and reduce heat. Simmer soup for about 90 minutes – until beans are softened.

Turn off the heat and remove the ham bone from the soup. Shred off all the meat. Discard the parsley, thyme, celery and bay leaves. Allow the soup to cool for a while and then skim off the excess fat from the top. If you do not have a skimmer lightly press a large spoon on the edges and the fat will come into it. Discard.

Return the shredded ham to the pot. Add the carrots and squash and simmer for about 20 minutes or until the carrots and squash are fully cooked and soft. Skim off any foam that might form. Add the honey, Balsamic vinegar and lemon juice. Mix well and simmer for an extra five minutes.

Serve and garnish with chipped parsley. Enjoy

\*Do not soak lentils if that is what you are going to use.