

A warming, lightly spiced soup topped with stringy fontina cheese and spiked with lemon. Serve with chunks of fresh bread.

## cannellini bean soup with **fontina gremolata**

### **SERVES 4**

4 tablespoons unsalted butter  
1/2 cup diced onions  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 cup dried cannellini beans, soaked overnight & then drained  
1/2 cup diced carrot  
1/2 hot red chili pepper, seeded & minced  
2 ripe tomatoes, chopped  
2 cardamom pods, crushed  
1 teaspoon cumin seeds  
5 1/2 cups Chicken Stock or Vegetable Stock (see page 16)  
Salt & freshly ground black pepper

### *For the gremolata*

3/4 cup very finely grated fontina cheese  
1 tablespoon finely grated lemon zest  
1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves  
2 garlic cloves, crushed

### *Alternative cheeses*

Raclette, Taleggio, Port Salut, or Cornish Yarg

Melt the butter in a pan over a medium heat, add the onions and garlic and sauté for 4–5 minutes, until softened. Add the cannellini beans, carrot, chili, and tomatoes, then cover and cook gently for 5 minutes. Next, stir in the cardamom, cumin seeds, and stock and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 1–1 1/2 hours, or until the beans are tender. Pour the soup into a blender and blitz to a purée, then strain it through a fine sieve to give a creamy texture. Adjust the seasoning and reheat gently.

For the gremolata, mix all the ingredients together in a bowl. Pour the soup into warm bowls, scatter the gremolata over and serve right away.

### **PG TIPS**

Other legumes such as lentils can be used with just as good effect. I sometimes leave the beans whole and top them with the gremolata to serve as a winter stew.