

## WHIPPED BEAN PURÉE WITH TALEGGIO CHEESE

You can use any white beans, such as cannellini, haricot, or even large butter beans. The idea is that the smooth, creamy blandness of the starchy purée makes a terrific base for the strongly flavored, rind-washed Taleggio cheese. You could try all sorts of variations on the Taleggio cheese theme, such as crumbled feta or freshly grated parmesan. A tablespoon of mustard, freshly grated horseradish, or salty tapenade works well too, or, if you feel really extravagant, a liberal splash of truffle oil. Serve a dollop of this purée with grilled poultry or rabbit, or some good meaty sausages.

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¾ cup white beans, soaked overnight in 2–3 times their volume of cold water	1 very small clove garlic, crushed to a paste with ½ teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons olive oil	2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, finely sliced	juice of ½ lemon
1 large clove garlic, roughly chopped	2 ounces Taleggio cheese, cut into ½-inch dice
1 tablespoon sherry	salt and pepper
3 cups water	

**STRAIN THE BEANS** and rinse them well. In a heavy-based pot, heat the olive oil and then add the onion. Sauté for a few minutes, add the chopped garlic, and stir on a gentle heat for 1 minute. Add the beans, stirring well to coat them with oil, and then add the sherry. Add water and bring to the boil, then lower the heat and simmer uncovered for 30–40 minutes, or until the beans are tender and most of the liquid has evaporated.

Toward the end of the cooking time, raise the heat to boil off any remaining liquid, but watch carefully to avoid burning.

Pour the beans into a sieve and strain any residual liquid, then tip them into a blender and add the garlic paste, extra-virgin olive oil, and lemon juice.

Blend the mixture on high until it is reduced to a smooth purée. To serve, heat the purée through and gently fold in the Taleggio cheese.

Taste and season with salt and pepper.