Crock-Pot Ham and Bean Soup

Serves 6

**Ingredients:**
1 pound dried navy beans (or Great northern beans)
1 large onion, diced
3 celery stalks, diced
1 medium carrot, diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 bay leaf
1 ham hock (or ham bone or Pkg. ham pieces)
4-6 cups water
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
Salt and pepper, to taste

**Directions:**
1. Wash your hands with soap and water.
2. Soak the beans in water (the water should rise a few inches above the beans) overnight. Drain beans through a colander before cooking.
3. Add the beans, onion, celery, carrots, garlic, bay leaf, and ham hock to the slow cooker.
4. Fill the slow cooker with water until just barely covering the beans.
5. Cover and slow cook for 5 1/2 to 6 1/2 hours on high, or 7 1/2-8 1/2 hours on low, until beans have softened.
6. Remove the ham hock or bone from the slow cooker and strip off any meat. Chop and add the meat to the cooker along with the Italian seasoning, remaining chopped ham, salt and pepper.
7. Cover and cook for another 30 minutes.

**Nutrition Information:** Serving size 1, Calories 166, Total Fat 3g, Saturated Fat 1g, Cholesterol 14mg, Carbohydrates 25g, Fiber 9g, Sugar 2g, Protein 11g

Source: Adapted from Wholefully.com
Did you make a New Years’ Resolution to live a healthier lifestyle in 2023? If not, it’s not too late to start! The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends the following tips and tricks to begin reaching your health goals:

- Start with small changes. Instead of a diet overhaul, make small changes that you can maintain with your current lifestyle.
- Take one day at a time. Sometimes things don’t go as planned. If you miss a day or a milestone, don’t give up!
- Be active your way. Pick activities you enjoy! If you focus on having fun while being active, you'll be more likely to stick to it.
- Team up with a friend. Having additional support and accountability may help you both stay on track to reach your goals.
- Celebrate successes! Reward yourself as you build positive habits... you've earned it!

January is Family Fit Lifestyle Month! This is a great time for you to create healthy lifestyle habits as a family that can last all year long. One healthy lifestyle habit is fitting physical activity into your day. Physical activity can help kids feel better right away by supporting better sleep, a better mood, and even better grades. This month, try to get active together! The Move Your Way® campaign for the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans suggests trying things like making your morning walks a race, dancing while dinner is in the oven, or showing your kids your favorite ways to move. Kids ages 6 to 17 need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. As part of that daily 60 minutes, they also need muscle-strengthening activity (like swinging on the monkey bars) at least three days a week and bone-strengthening activity (like running and jumping) at least three days a week. Wondering what counts as physical activity for your kids? Anything that gets them moving! You can learn more about ways to help your kids get active every day at health.gov/MoveYourWay/Get-Kids-Active. Nebraska Extension also has some great tips for keeping your family active during these cold winter months, including brainstorming how your favorite family activities during warmer months can be adapted for winter months, enjoying a dance party, making story time active time by having everyone hop on one foot or do a jumping jack every time a certain word is read in a story, and more. They also recommend limiting screen time to no more than two hours per day. You can read all of their tips online at bit.ly/Tips-For-Winter-Activity.