

## WHITE BEANS AND FENNEL

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1½ pounds fennel (about 3 bulbs)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, sliced thin
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 2 (15-ounce) cans white beans, drained
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 4 slices bacon

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Preheat oven to 375°. Trim feathery tops off the fennel and cut the bulbs into ½-inch slices. Melt the butter in a large skillet over moderate heat, then add the fennel and onion and cook gently, stirring frequently, about 30 minutes, until vegetables are softened and wilted but not browned (they will steam in some of their own juices). Salt and pepper to taste.

Toss the beans and basil together in a bowl, then add the onions and fennel and toss again to mix. (You may add some leftover diced ham, roast beef or pork if you wish.) Place in a 1½-quart baking dish, top with the bacon, and bake covered for 30 minutes. Remove the cover and bake 30 minutes. Serves 6.