Opinion
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This kale and cannellini bean recipe is adapted from the cookbook "Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone" by Deborah Madison. (NCR photo/Teresa Malcolm)



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This recipe is part of a Lent 2025 series where National Catholic Reporter staff will share some of their favorite meatless meals. Sign up for the EarthBeat Reflections email newsletter to receive a recipe in your inbox each Friday of Lent this year.



Many years ago, a friend gave me the cookbook *Vegetarian Cooking for Everyone* by Deborah Madison. My copy shows its long use, with notes and food stains and crinkled pages — a sign of a cookbook well worth recommending. And the place where the binding is cracked and pages have come loose makes it easy to find my favorite, most-made recipe in there.

When kale is available at the farmers market, this meal is my go-to. It makes a good main dish for dinner, but I've also made it as a side dish for holiday meals, where it's gotten good reviews.

My variations from the original are mainly in proportions of ingredients. I like to up the ratio of beans, and when it comes to garlic and rosemary, more is always better!

Kale with cannellini beans
(adapted from Deborah Madison)

Servings — about 4

Ingredients

- 1 large bunch of kale, or 2 smaller bunches, stems and ribs removed
- Salt and ground pepper
- 1 onion, diced
- 2-3 T olive oil
- At least 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-3 pinches red pepper flakes
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 cup dry white wine or dry vermouth
- 2 cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- Red wine vinegar

Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the kale. Simmer 7-10 minutes, then remove the kale to a bowl. Reserve some of the cooking water (no need to thoroughly drain the kale). Roughly chop the leaves.
2. In a large skillet, sauté the onion, garlic, pepper flakes and rosemary in the olive oil for about 3 minutes. Add the wine and cook until it's reduced to a syrupy sauce.
3. Mix in the beans and kale. Heat through, adding a little reserved cooking water as needed to keep the mixture loose. Add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Serve with a splash of red wine vinegar.

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