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Gigantes Plaki-Greek Baked Beans

Ingredients

- Extra virgin olive oil
- ½ large onion, roughly chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and roughly chopped
- 1 celery stalk, roughly chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- Kosher salt
- 1 (425g) can diced tomatoes, with juices
- 6 tbsp water
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley, plus more for garnish
- ½ tbsp fresh thyme leaves
- ¾ tsp dried oregano
- ¼ to ½ tsp red pepper flakes
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 dried bay leaf
- 1 (425g) can butter beans, drained and rinsed (or the largest beans you can find)
- Creamy feta cheese, crumbled
- Rustic bread, for serving

Method

1. Preheat oven: Position a rack in the centre of the oven and preheat the oven to 190°C.
2. Sauté the vegetables: In a large oven-safe skillet set over medium-high heat, add ½ cup olive oil. Once the oil shimmers, add the onion, carrot, celery, and garlic. Season with a pinch of salt (about ¼ tsp). Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables soften, 5-7 minutes.
3. Add the tomatoes and spices: Add the tomatoes with their juices and the water. Season with another pinch of salt (about ¼ tsp). Add the parsley, thyme, oregano, red pepper flakes, black pepper, cinnamon, and bay leaf.
4. Add the beans: Stir in the beans and cook for 5 minutes over high heat. At this point, taste and adjust the seasoning to your liking, then transfer the mixture to the oven and bake until thickened and the top layer turns a light golden brown - 20 to 30 minutes.
5. Finish and serve: Remove and discard the bay leaf. Finish the dish with a drizzle of olive oil, a pinch of parsley, and a good sprinkle of feta. Serve with rustic bread.