



# JP'S KITCHEN

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## CASSOULET DE CHASTELNAUDARY

### INTRODUCTION

The name of this dish comes from "Cassole", the name of the glazed earthenware dish in which the Cassoulet is gratinée (in English, "encrusted" with breadcrumbs).

Basically "baked beans", but not the type you find in a tin at the supermarket. It remains my favourite "go to" French dish in the colder months of the year and it's great fun to make, too.

Cassoulet originates from the south-west of France, not far from Toulouse. It is a casserole or stew of meat and white beans, slowly cooked and simmered in a rich and flavourful tomato & herb stock.

The different meats used in this dish are duck confit, Toulouse pork sausage, pork neck, and pork belly; some recipes include mutton and other meats but pork & duck are the best.

Cassoulet is a dish with humble peasant origins; but today it is one of the pinnacles of French cuisine known for its complexity of flavours.

Rich, full of flavour and fatty, it may be served with mixed bitter greens and it washes down well with a Cabernet Sauvignon or a GSM blend, such as of the Chateaufort du Pape variety.

### INGREDIENTS

750g Dried haricot (white) beans

Cannellini Beans or Great North Beans may be used as a substitute as they are from the same family (*Phaseolus Vulgaris*).

500g pork belly

400g pork neck

400g Toulouse sausages  
(or any pork, garlic, and herb sausages)

Two duck marylands  
(leg with thigh attached); pre-packaged duck confit is an alternative.

About 6 – 10 whole cloves  
(depending on your taste)

Dried thyme, salt, freshly ground black pepper to taste

½ cup plain flour (or gluten free flour)

400g ripe tomatoes  
(may be supplemented with a tin of puréed tomatoes in reserve)

3 onions

10 cloves of garlic

1 large leek (white part only)

2 carrots

Bouquet Garni  
(tie together 3 bay leaves, 1 sprig of parsley, 3 sprigs of thyme)

250g goose fat or duck fat

¾ cup dried breadcrumbs  
(can use gluten free if required)

Two cups of supermarket chicken stock  
in reserve if needed

### METHOD

Place beans in a pot of cold, salted water for 4-5 hours.

Make a stock for cooking the beans:

- With a sharp knife, separate the rind from the pork belly
- Peel the smallest onion and stud it with about a dozen whole cloves
- Peel two cloves of garlic and cut each in half
- Coarsely chop the leek
- Assemble the Bouquet Garni
- Fill a stainless steel pot with 4 litres of water, add the pork rind and the other ingredients with a pinch of salt, bring to the boil then simmer for 90 minutes
- Strain the stock into a larger pot and discard the pork rind and other ingredients.

Prepare the pork neck:

- Peel two large cloves of garlic and slice into 12 slivers
- Combine a teaspoon of salt, pepper, and thyme in a small bowl, mix in the slivers of garlic
- Make 12 incisions into the pork neck and insert a seasoned slither of garlic into each
- Rub the pork neck with the salt, pepper, and thyme mix that remains in the bowl.

Skin the tomatoes:

- Drop the whole tomatoes into boiling water for 10 seconds
- Cool under cold, running water
- The skins should lift off the flesh, peel off with your fingers
- Cut in half, squeeze out the seeds, and coarsely chop the tomato flesh.

Par-Boil the beans:

- Drain the beans and discard the soaking water
- Tip the beans into the pot with the stock
- Cook over a low heat for about 60-70 minutes taking care the beans do not disintegrate.
- Cut in half, squeeze out the seeds, and coarsely chop the tomato flesh.



## METHOD CONTINUED

### Prepare the meat

- As the beans are cooking, melt a tablespoon of goose / duck fat in a large frying pan on medium heat
- Season the pork belly and the duck with salt & pepper
- Brown off the pork neck on each side, then remove and set aside
- Brown off the pork belly, then remove and set aside
- Prick the sausages with a fork and brown them off, then remove and set aside
- Lightly roll the duck in flour then brown off well, remove and set aside.

### Prepare vegetables, sweat them in the same frying pan over a medium heat

- Add a little more goose / duck fat to the frying pan
- Chop the carrots into chunky pieces and add to the frying pan, cook for 3-4 minutes
- Finely chop the onions and add to the frying pan, stir & cook with the carrots for 3 minutes
- Chop 5-6 cloves of garlic and add to the frying pan, cook for 2-3 minutes
- Add the chopped tomatoes (top up with half a tin of pureed tomatoes, if needed)
- A generous sprinkle of thyme, salt, and pepper and continue cooking for a further 3-5 minutes.

Combine the meats and vegetables into a large pot and simmer over the stove on a low heat for 30-40 minutes; add a cup of chicken stock to maintain moisture.

Remove the sausages, pork belly, and pork neck from the pot and carve into 3-5cm chunky pieces; cut the sausages into halves.

### Assemble the Cassoulet

- Smash or halve two cloves of garlic and rub the inside of a large ovenproof casserole (clay, ceramic, or iron)...don't waste the garlic, throw it into the casserole
- Mix the vegetables and cooking juices in with the beans
- With a ladle, spread a layer of beans & vegetables on the bottom of the casserole
- Add a layer of meat (sausage, pork, and duck)
- Continue to layer the ingredients and finish off with a top layer of beans & vegetables and all remaining cooking juices & bean cooking stock (top up with a cup of chicken stock if too dry)
- Melt the remaining goose / duck fat and float over the surface
- Sprinkle the breadcrumbs evenly over the surface
- Bake in a pre-heated oven (160°C) for 2 hours; first hour covered with aluminium foil and second hour uncovered so that the breadcrumbs form a crispy, brown crust.

Serve straight from the casserole with a robust red wine and some bread.

BON APPETIT – I HOPE YOU ENJOY....JP