



# CASSOULET

Serves 6



Cassoulet—named for the earthenware pot in which it is traditionally cooked—is one of the most delicious and memorable dishes in French cuisine. Refined as it is, it's essentially a rustic meat and bean stew, perfect for autumn. The classic preparation takes a lot of time and requires a few hard to find ingredients, like duck confit and lard. It is excellent and worth doing, but I often don't have time during a busy week. This simplified version doesn't require excessive culinary stamina, and the ingredients can be found easily at any good grocery store.

Soaking the beans and marinating the pork shoulder the night before will set you up for a flavorful finish. The next day you have about thirty minutes of active time followed by about two hours of baking time. The long cooking time creates a dish rich in texture and flavor. A watercress salad and a loaf of Macrina's crusty artisan bread make the perfect accompaniment.

- Leslie Mackie

## INGREDIENTS:

1-1/2 cups dried Great Northern or navy beans	4 slices thick-cut bacon, 1/2" dice
3 cups water	1 medium white onion, diced
1 teaspoon salt	3 medium vine-ripened tomatoes, diced
1/4 teaspoon black pepper	2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, finely chopped
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice	2 teaspoons fresh thyme, finely chopped
3 tablespoons fresh garlic, chopped and divided	1/2 cup white wine
12 - 16 ounces pork shoulder blade steak	2-1/2 cups chicken stock
2 tablespoons olive oil	1 cup Macrina Croutons (sold in our cafés)
2 Italian sausages (about 8 ounces)	

## DIRECTIONS:

Rinse beans and place in medium size bowl. Cover with water and refrigerate overnight. To marinate the pork shoulder, combine salt, pepper, allspice and 1/2 teaspoon of the garlic. Rub on both sides of pork shoulder. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Drain and rinse beans. Set aside. Cut pork shoulder into 1" cubes, cutting around the bone.

Position baking rack in center of oven and preheat to 325° F.

Place a medium casserole pan over high heat, add the olive oil and sauté the pork shoulder and bone. Brown all sides and remove from pan. Add sausages. Brown and partially cook, turning every few minutes. Remove from pan. Let cool for 10 minutes before cutting into 1" rounds. Set aside.

Reduce heat and add the bacon. Render bacon for 3-5 minutes. Pour off excess fat, leaving enough to cover the pan. Add the onions and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add the remaining garlic and herbs and cook for 3 minutes. Add tomatoes and cook for 5 minutes. Deglaze the pan with white wine and cook until reduced by half. Add the beans, pork, sausage and chicken stock. Bring the mixture to a boil. Skim off any foam that forms on top. Cover the casserole with lid and bake for 1-1/2 hours. Remove from oven and check that the beans are tender and it's still soupy. If it's too dry, add more chicken stock.

Crush croutons in a food processor (or in a plastic bag using a rolling pin). Scatter crushed croutons over the surface of the cassoulet. Return to the oven for another 20 minutes or until the top is crisp. Enjoy!