

Easy Cassoulet

Adapted from Cathy Thomas, Orange County Register, 12/2010 (she started with a Bon Appetit recipe)



A peasant Southern French casserole using pork, chicken and smoked sausage. Duck is traditional - here chicken is substituted for it.

1 1/2 pounds boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 2" cubes

Seasoning blend to taste (see cook's notes)

3 tablespoons olive oil, divided use

3 ounces smoked bacon, diced

1 pound pork chops, smoked or regular, about 1 pound, cut into chunks

1 large onion, chopped (or 2 smaller onions)

2 large garlic cloves, minced

3/4 cup chicken broth, plus 1/4 cup more if needed

1 1/2 tablespoons tomato paste

1 whole bay leaf

1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

30 ounces canned great northern beans, 15-ounce cans, drained

30 ounces canned cannellini beans, 15-ounce cans, drained

3/4 pound Polish sausage (turkey or pork), cut into 1/2-inch diagonal slices

1 cup Parmesan cheese, grated

Herb mixture: 6 tablespoons minced fresh parsley combined with 1 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh thyme, divided use

1 cup croutons garnish (see notes)

Servings: 8

Seasoning blend: use some kind of spicy, non-salt based seasoning for the chicken. Make your own if you don't have one on your spice shelf. Croutons: cut up about 1 1/2 cups of fresh baguette, drizzle lightly with oil and bake at 425 for 4-7 minutes until bread is golden. Cool. Place in a plastic bag and use mallet or pounder to break apart the croutons into smaller pieces. You should have about 1 cup of crumbs and chunks.

1. Fifteen minutes before baking, preheat oven to 400° degrees. Generously season chicken thighs with seasoning blend on both sides. Place in single layer on small baking dish and bake until thoroughly cooked, about 25 to 30 minutes in preheated oven.
2. Meanwhile, place 2 tablespoons olive oil in a 5-quart, deep, ovenproof casserole. Add bacon and pork chops. Bake uncovered in preheated oven for 20 minutes, turning chops once and stirring pancetta.
3. In a large skillet, heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil. Add onions and garlic. Cook on medium-high until onion is transparent, stirring occasionally. Stir in broth, tomato paste, bay leaf and pepper. Cover and simmer for 2 minutes.
4. Stir in beans and 4 tablespoons fresh herb mixture. Simmer for 2 minutes.
5. Remove chops and bacon from casserole, draining any excess oil. Do not wash casserole. Pour half the bean mixture into casserole. Add bacon, chops, chicken thighs and sausage. Top with remaining bean mixture. If mixture seems dry, add 1/4 cup of chicken broth. Top with Parmesan cheese.
6. Bake, uncovered, for 20-25 minutes (or 35-40 minutes if it has been refrigerated). Discard bay leaf. Taste and add salt if needed. Garnish with croutons and remaining fresh herb mixture.

Per Serving (excluding unknown items): 612 Calories; 34g Fat (50.6% calories from fat); 41g Protein; 34g Carbohydrate; 9g Dietary Fiber; 115mg Cholesterol; 1330mg Sodium. Exchanges: 2 Grain(Starch); 5 Lean Meat; 1/2 Vegetable; 4 1/2 Fat.

Carolyn T's Blog - Tasting Spoons:
<http://tastingspoons.com>