

Jacques Pépin: Fast Food My Way

Recipe: Thirty-Minute Cassoulet

"The famous cassoulet of southwest France features white beans, roast pork, sausage, and duck or goose. Assembled in a cast-iron or earthenware casserole, it is usually covered with bread crumbs and takes hours--sometimes days--to prepare."

"In my version, I use ham, canned cannellini beans, and Italian and bratwurst sausages and serve the stew on a large platter, home style. Even considering the time required to remove the plastic covering and the tough outside skin from the ham, it doesn't take more than 30 minutes to prepare from start to finish."

Serves: 4-6

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon good olive oil
- About 1 pound rolled shoulder ham (also called a daisy ham or Boston Butt), tough outer skin removed
- About 3/4 pound hot Italian sausages, cut into 3-inch pieces (about 6 pieces)
- 4 bratwurst sausages (about 1 pound)
- 1 cup diced (1/2 inch) whole button mushrooms (about 3 ounces)
- 3/4 cup diced (1/2-inch) onion
- 2 tablespoons crushed garlic (about 4 large cloves)
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 (15 1/2 ounces each) cans cannellini beans, drained and rinsed under warm running water
- 3/4 cup diced (1-inch) tomato (1 large plump tomato)
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh parsley

For Serving

- Tabasco sauce
- Dijon-style mustard

Preparation

Heat the oil in a large skillet and add the ham and Italian sausage.

Cover and cook over high heat for 7 to 8 minutes, turning occasionally.

Add the bratwurst, mushrooms, onion, garlic, thyme, and bay leaf. Mix well and cook for another 5 to 6 minutes.

Add the beans, tomato, water, and pepper, bring back to a boil, reduce the heat to low, cover, and boil gently for 5 minutes.

At serving time, discard the bay leaf, cut the ham into slices and the sausage pieces in half, and arrange the meat on a platter with the beans.

Sprinkle the parsley on top. Serve with the Tabasco and mustard.