

Braised Sausages with Borlotti Beans, Rosemary and Sage

Ingredients

1 lb (450 g) good, meaty sausages
8 oz (225 g) dried borlotti beans, pre-soaked and drained, soaking liquid reserved
1 heaped teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary, plus 2-3 sprigs to garnish
1 heaped teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary, plus 2-3 sprigs to garnish
1 heaped teaspoon chopped fresh sage, plus 2-3 leaves to garnish
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1 tablespoon olive oil
4 oz (110 g) sliced smoked pancetta (or smoked bacon), chopped
1 large red onion, peeled and chopped
2 cloves garlic
10 fl oz (275 ml) dry white wine
salt and freshly milled black pepper
Pre-heat the oven to gas mark 1, 275°F (140°C).



Equipment

You will also need a lidded, flameproof casserole with a capacity of 4 pints (2.25 litres).

Method

First of all, soak the borlotti beans. Wash them under cold, running water and discard any broken ones or alien bits. Then, if it is convenient, soak them overnight in 4 pints (2.25 litres) cold water. If you need them today and haven't the time for this, simply bring them up to the boil (using the same quantity of water), boil for 10 minutes and leave them to soak for two hours. Drain the beans, reserving the soaking liquid. Heat the oil in the casserole over a medium heat and carefully brown the sausages, turning them occasionally so they are a nice golden brown colour on all sides – this will take 8-10 minutes. After that, remove them to a plate, then add the pancetta to the frying pan, turn up the heat and toss it around for about 5 minutes, or until it's golden brown at the edges. Now, using a draining spoon, transfer it to join the sausages, then turn the heat down again to medium and soften the onion for 10 minutes in the juices left in the pan, stirring it around from time to time. Then add the garlic and cook for another minute. Next, add the drained beans to the casserole, along with the herbs, then the sausages and pancetta, tucking them in among the beans, and finally, add the wine and 10 fl oz (275 ml) of the reserved water. Season with salt and freshly milled black pepper and bring everything up to simmering point on the hob. Now put a lid on the casserole and transfer it to the centre shelf of the oven to cook slowly for 3 hours. Serve garnished with the sprigs of rosemary and sage. I don't think this needs any other vegetable but a green salad, and some Italian cheese would be nice to follow.