

# Cassoulet (Toulouse)

The inspiration for trying this classical **French**<sup>1</sup> recipe came from Nigel Slater and the Observer Food Magazine. Supplemented by research with French colleagues and the internet, the serendipitous discovery of Toulouse sausages at the Driffield farmer's market, herewith a great tasty meal, all in one dish!

Hot and delicious, enough for hungry people, topped with glorious crisp and toasty breadcrumbs.

This is essentially a two meat dish using pork, pork sausage, and duck. However, variations can include lamb or partridge. Use plenty of beans.

But it does take an afternoon to cook and so could be good for a kitchen party with a bottle of red cooking wine (cooking wine = wine you drink whilst cooking!). Quantities are a meal for 4 to 6 ish.

## Introduction

The basic structure of this major cooking project is:

### 1 Soak the beans overnight

2 Cook the beans, up to 60 minutes

3 Prepare the meats, about 30 minutes

4 Simmer-stew the meats, about 45 minutes

5 Assemble the cassoulet, about 5 minutes

6 Bake 60 minutes

7 Add topping and bake 30 minutes

Step 3 can begin whilst the beans are cooking so the overall cooking time is between 3 and 4 hours.

The times quoted are fair estimates rather than exact figures. Temper the timings with your judgment to know when the ingredients are ready.

## Ingredients

### *Stage 2*

1 onion

1 carrot

300 gm piece of bacon

3 bay leaves

3 cloves garlic

10 **FAIRTRADE** peppercorns

### *Stage 1*

600 gm haricot beans  
dry

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.fairtradecookbook.org.uk/countries/france.htm>

### Stage 3

- 50 ml duck fat or oil
- 600 gm boned pork shoulder or leg cubed
- 4 duck legs
- 300 gm bacon diced
- 4 toulouse sausages

### Stage 4

- 2 onions peeled
- 4 cloves garlic
- 3 large tomatoes
- 3 bay leaves
- 150 ml **FAIRTRADE** red wine

### Stages 6 and 7

- 250 gm breadcrumbs

## Method

### *1 Soak the beans overnight*

Weigh the beans and pop them in a dish.

Cover generously with cold water and stand overnight.

The beans will become plump.

### *2 Cook the beans (up to 60 minutes).*

Drain the beans and put them in a large pan.

Peel the onion and skin the carrot, put them in with the beans.

Add the bacon. bay leaves, garlic and pepper-corns.

Cover with water and bring to the boil.

Skim off any frothy scum that appears.

Turn the heat down to a good simmer and leave until the beans are **almost** cooked. This can be anywhere between 40 minutes to 1 hour.

### *3 Prepare the meats (about 30 minutes)*

In the meantime, fry the cubed pork (hot) in flavoursome fat until golden.

Remove the pork and set aside.

Sear the duck legs in the hot fat and set aside.

Fry the cubed bacon until the fat is golden and set aside with the sealed pork.

Cut the sausages into portions, and seal them in the fat, and set aside.

### *4 Simmer-stew the meats (45 minutes)*

Soften the onion which can be quite thickly sliced, peel and chop the garlic and tomatoes and add to the pan, along with the bay leaves.

Add the red wine and sufficient water just to cover the meats.

Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for about 45 minutes until the stew is rich and meaty.

### *5 Assemble the cassoulet (5 minutes)*

Drain the beans keeping the liquid and the bacon.

Slice the bacon and use the slices to cover the bottom of a Le Crueset large skillet.

Cover with some of the beans.

Add a layer of meat and onions.

Add another layer of beans.

Pop the duck in amongst the beans and cover with further layers of meat and onions until it is all used up.

Top up with liquid from the meat, and beany liquor if needed.

### *6 Bake (60 minutes)*

Top with half the breadcrumbs and bake at Gas Mark 3 for 1 hour.

### *7 Add topping and bake (30 minutes)*

Stir the breadcrumbs into the cassoulet and then top with the remaining breadcrumbs.

Pop a few dabs of butter or a little duck fat on top and put back in the oven for another 30 minutes until the top is golden brown.

## **To serve**

Serve with a light green salad, just a few leaves like cress.

Follow up with a sorbet or a gentle fruit salad.

## **Variation**

Cassoulet de Castelnaudry is made with Pork

Cassoulet de Toulouse is richer than Castelnaudry, add in lamb and toulouse sausages

Cassoulet de Carcassonne is also made up with Partridges.