

# St. Innocent Cassoulet

## From the kitchen of Mark Vlossak

### Step 1. Prepare the beans:

2-1/2 cups white beans - I use a mixture of small white navy, flageolet, and large white runner beans.  
4 quarts water  
1T. Kosher salt

Boil the water with salt and add the beans. Bring back to a slow simmer. After 5 min., turn off heat, cover pot and let sit at least 2 hours or overnight in refrigerator.

### Step 2. Saute the vegetables:

2 large onions  
4 large carrots  
4 sticks of celery  
olive oil  
salt and pepper

Chop the vegetables so they are as large as the tip of your little finger. Sauté the onions in olive oil over high heat until they soften and begin to caramelize, then add the celery. Cook until celery is slightly softened. Do not overcook. Set aside to cool in an open bowl. Add a bit more olive oil and sauté the carrots at medium-high heat until they soften. The outside will begin to turn lemon yellow - this is normal. Add to same bowl. Season the vegetables lightly with salt and pepper.

### Step 3. Cook meats:

15 sausages, about 4# – I use pork bratwurst, Spanish Merguez, and an apple brandy, duck sausage. The key is to use sausages with very different flavors. The sausages cook better if they are frozen.

3/4# thick cut, high quality, smoked bacon.

Optional: 2# pork loin, quail, or duck breast - sauté to brown. Cut pork loin into chunks. Split quail into quarters. Set aside.

Preheat the oven to 500 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with foil and place the frozen sausages on the sheet. Bake until the outsides are brown. (about 20 min. if they are frozen). Remove from the oven and cool. Cut the sausages crosswise into 1" slices. Coarsely chop the bacon and sauté over high heat until the fat is rendered and the meat is just browned. Add the sausages, bacon AND bacon fat to the sautéed vegetables.

### Step 4. Assembly:

Drain the beans then add enough chicken stock to just barely cover them.

Add:

2 tsp. of Kosher salt  
a generous amount of freshly ground black pepper  
3 bay leaves  
1 tsp. each basil and thyme  
1 coarsely chopped onion  
6 whole cloves  
6 cloves of garlic crushed  
1 bunch chopped parsley

Add sautéed vegetables, sausages, and bacon and any of the optional meats. Stir to combine. The mixture should be sloppy, but not soupy. Add stock as needed. Place in one or two large casseroles. Drizzle with olive oil or duck fat if available. Bake in a slow oven at 300 degrees F for 3-4 hours until thickened and bubbly. Add a bit of water or stock as needed to keep the mixture moist. It is definitely better when reheated a second time. Serves 8-12