

# Cassoulet (Serves 6–8)

## Ingredients

- 500 g dried white beans (Tarbais or lingot beans are traditional; Great Northern beans work as a substitute)
  - 2 duck legs confit (confit de canard)
  - 350 g pork shoulder, cut into chunks
  - 250 g pork belly (unsmoked), cut into chunks
  - 250 g Toulouse sausage (or another garlicky pork sausage)
  - 150 g pancetta or slab bacon, cut into cubes
  - 1 onion, chopped
  - 2 carrots, sliced
  - 4 cloves garlic, minced
  - 1 bouquet garni (thyme, bay leaf, parsley tied together)
  - 2 tomatoes, peeled and chopped (or 200 g canned chopped tomatoes)
  - 1.5 L chicken stock (or enough to cover beans)
  - Duck fat (or goose fat / pork fat)
  - Salt and freshly ground black pepper
  - Breadcrumbs (optional, for crust)
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## Preparation

1.

### Soak the Beans

- The night before: soak beans in cold water for at least 12 hours. Drain and rinse.

2.

### Cook the Beans

- Put beans in a large pot with fresh water, bring to a boil, simmer for 10 min, then drain (this removes impurities).
- Return beans to the pot, add bouquet garni, onion, carrots, and enough chicken stock to cover.
- Simmer gently for about 1 hour until beans are just tender (not mushy). Remove bouquet garni.

3.

### **Prepare the Meats**

- In a large skillet, melt 1–2 tbsp duck fat.
- Brown pork shoulder, pork belly, pancetta, and sausage until golden. Remove and set aside.
- In the same pan, add garlic and tomatoes, cook until mixture thickens (a quick rustic tomato sauce).

4.

### **Assemble the Cassoulet**

- Preheat oven to 160°C (325°F).
- In a large earthenware cassole or Dutch oven:
  1. Place a layer of beans at the bottom.
  2. Add a layer of meats (pork, sausage, duck legs).
  3. Repeat layers, finishing with beans on top.
  4. Pour cooking liquid (bean stock + tomato mixture) over everything until just covered.
- Bake uncovered for about 2 hours, adding more liquid if needed to keep beans just submerged.

5.

### **Crust & Final Cooking**

- After 2 hours, break the crust that has formed on top with the back of a spoon, pushing it slightly into the cassoulet.
- Repeat this “breaking the crust” 2–3 times over the next hour.
- For the final 30 minutes, sprinkle with breadcrumbs if you like a crunchier topping.

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## **Serving**

- Serve piping hot straight from the dish. Traditionally paired with a robust red wine from the Languedoc (Minervois, Corbières) or a Cahors Malbec.
- A simple green salad with mustard vinaigrette is the perfect side.