

Y. ROUSSEAU.

Cassoulet de Susanne de Gascogne

Inspired by French home-sick husband

Serves 10-12 hungry guests

*This recipe is a synthesis of what I've learned from cookbook author Paula Wolfert, chef Sara Scott, and time spent in Gascony... not to mention the increasing number of times I've ventured forth with my own Cassoulet experiences. Ariane Daguin's company, D'Artagnan.com has been quite helpful in providing the most authentic ingredients outside of French Gers. Ingredients with *are found there.*

Note that this dish is a labor of love and can be divided up into 2-3 days. All steps, even the final putting together and baking, can be done ahead and will, in fact, deepen the flavors. So relax and take your time... that's what they do in Gascony!

Ingredients:

- 2 lb Tarbais* beans (local Rancho Gordo has them)
- *Bouquet garni*: parsley, celery rib, thyme, bay leaf, shallot, garlic, tied in cheese cloth
- Sel de Mer & cracked pepper
- 2 lb boneless pork shoulder, cut into 1.5" cubes
- 8 oz fresh pork skin with fat attached, or salt pork/pancetta
- ½ c duck fat*
- 3 small carrots, sliced thin
- 2 medium onions, diced
- 6 cloves garlic
- 1 stalk celery, chopped
- 1 large plum tomato, chopped, or 14 oz can of diced tomatoes with juice
- 4 thyme sprigs
- 2 bay leaves
- 1/2 cup Y. Rousseau Colombard
- 2 fresh ham hocks
- 2 quarts + 2 cups chicken broth (homemade, worth it!)
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 large shallots
- 6-8 duck confit legs*

- 1 lb Toulouse-style garlic sausage* and/or 4 pkgs Armagnac duck sausage*
- 1-2 cups duck fat*
- 2 large *Cassole*, or deep baking dishes with large surface for forming the crust

The Beans:

Place beans and *bouquet garni* in a large pot. Fill the pot with cold water to cover plus more, the beans. Bring to a boil, then turn down and simmer until the beans are tender, up to 2-2.5 hours. Add salt to taste, remove from the heat and let the beans cool in the water. Discard the *bouquet garni*. Drain the beans and reserve.

The Pork:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Ideally, season the pork chunks and skin/pancetta with salt and pepper the day ahead and let sit overnight in fridge covered loosely. Boil, then simmer the pork skin for 30 minutes to soften. Cut into strips. Reserve.

Place the duck fat in a large sauté pan over medium high heat. Sauté the onions, garlic, celery, carrot until tender, 5-6 minutes. Place the vegetables in a large roasting dish. Spread the tomatoes over them, scatter thyme & bay leaves. Add the pork chunks in an even layer. Pour wine over and drizzle with duck fat over the top.

Roast for 2.5-3 hours, or until the pork chunks are tender. Pick out pork chunks and strain vegetable mixture through a large strainer into a pot. Discard thyme stems & bay leaves. Puree vegetables in a food processor until smooth. Stir into beans. Remove & discard fat from remaining liquid, reserving liquid.

The Broth:

- 2 quarts chicken bone broth (homemade, worth it!)
- 2 smoked ham hocks
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 3 large shallots

Simmer together in large pot for 1.5 hrs until ham hocks are tender and broth is beautifully flavored.

Strain through a fine sieve into a large pot. Reserve the broth.

When ham hocks are cool, remove the meat and pull apart into smaller pieces, set aside. Add the reserve liquid from cooking the pork to this broth.

The Duck Confit:

*If you don't have a French mom who sends you home with cases of duck confit, you can purchase beautiful confit from Dartagnan.com along with many of the products needed for this Cassoulet and other Gascon favorites. (*see above)*

The most important thing is to reserve all duck fat from the container while removing the confit from the bones and scraping the excess fat from the pieces. You can use it for putting together the cassoulet.

The Sausages:

Heat some of the duck fat in the large sauté pan over medium heat and brown the sausages. Remove from the pan and set aside.

Using a *Cassole* plus (ideally) another clay pot, lay the softened pork skin on bottom of each dish, place half the beans evenly over. Tuck in half the pieces of duck confit, pork chunks, and sausages. Add remaining beans, and repeat with remaining duck, sausage and pork. Pour enough stock that it comes just to above the top of contents, or below edge of dish if full. Drizzle the top generously with duck fat. Bake 1.5 hours, remove and break the crust, turning it under. Add broth if it seems dry, drizzle duck fat and return to oven. Continue baking another 1.5 to 2 hrs, or until the cassoulet has a deep golden crust and is bubbling.

Serve with any Y. Rousseau Tannat!