

French-inspired Chicken Sausage Bean Soup

Ingredients

- ~3 lbs of chicken – cut-up whole chicken or bone-in pieces
- ~1 lb smoked, cooked sausage (i.e. French Morteau or Montbéliard)
- Stock vegetables (onion, 2 carrots, 2 celery)
- ~1 lb of white beans
- ~6 large carrots
- ~2 leeks
- ~2 small bulbs fennel
- Bouquet garni (bay leaf, thyme, parsley) x 2

Method

1. Brine beans overnight in 4 quarts of water with 3 tablespoons of dissolved salt.
2. Roast chicken pieces with whole stock vegetables at 400 F. It should take 30 to 40 minutes.
3. Remove chicken from bones and skin, and reserve.
4. Put chicken remains (bones, skin, etc.), roasted vegetables, bouquet garni and liquids from roasting pan (can deglaze with water) into pot, cover with cool water and bring slowly to a very light boil. Cook at a very light boil for ~2 hours to make stock. Drain and reserve stock (discard the rest).
5. Cut up sausages into bite size pieces and fry at medium temperature until cooked and fat is released. Drain fat.
6. Drain and rinse beans. Add to sausages with stock and bouquet garni and cook at a light boil until beans are done (can take a couple of hours). Top up with water as required and to get desired consistency. Taste for salt and pepper.
7. Discard bouquet garni. Add reserved chicken, carrots, leeks and fennel cut into bite size pieces.
8. Cook at a light boil until vegetables are softened a bit (I prefer carrots and fennel to be firm), about 5 minutes once the soup returns to the boil.

Notes

- The amounts of chicken, sausage, beans and vegetables can be adjusted to taste.
- You can use left-over roast chicken and make stock from the carcass.
- The chicken stock can be prepared in advance.
- Once the beans are cooked, the chicken can be added and a portion of the soup base frozen for future meals – just thaw, bring to boil, add an appropriate portion of vegetables, soften and serve. You can also freeze the soup with vegetables, it just makes them quite soft.