



White Bean, Bacon and Chorizo Soup

Method

Cut one of the celery sticks in half, set one half aside and slice all the remaining celery. Take the reserved section of celery and cut it in half once more. Remove the leaves from the parsley and set aside for later. Sandwich the parsley stems and thyme between the two sections of celery and tie the bundle together with string to make a bouquet garni. It's so much tastier to make your own bouquet garni than buy stale little bags of old herbs. They are very simple to make, just remember to use plain white string – not dyed, you don't want blue soup – to secure your herbs between the two sticks of celery. This will impart subtle herb flavours to the cooking soup.

Pour the oil into a thick-based pan and add the onion, garlic, chilli and sliced celery. Cook over a low heat for about 10 minutes or until soft.

Rinse the drained beans under running water and add to the pan with the chicken stock, celery bundle, bay leaf and bacon. Bring the pan to a simmer and cook until the beans are beginning to break up; about half an hour. Remove the bouquet garni and bay leaf with a slotted spoon and pour the soup into a blender. Puree the soup and push through a fine sieve to remove the tough skin of the beans.

You now have two choices to finish off the soup. The first method is to add the diced chorizo and simmer the soup for 10 minutes. The colour and flavour of the sausage will seep into the soup and be a major part of the flavour. Method two is to fry the diced chorizo in a little olive oil until lightly coloured and crisp then remove and sprinkle on top of the soup, reserving the oil. This will make the sausage more of a garnish than part of the soup; the choice is yours. Seasoning the soup should be left until this choice has been made as the sausage can make quite a difference to the flavour.

Finally, for both methods, add in the chopped parsley and reserved tinned beans, salt and pepper if needed and top with a swirl of olive oil or the red chorizo oil from the frying pan if you have chosen to fry the sausage.

Additional Information

Serves

4

Ingredients

5 tbsp olive oil
225g onion (roughly 2½), peeled and finely chopped
½ red chilli, deseeded and chopped
4 cloves of garlic, crushed
2½ sticks celery
60g lardons of dry cure smoked streaky bacon
4 sprigs parsley
2 sprigs thyme
1 bay leaf
1 litre white chicken stock
380g tinned white haricot beans, drained

To finish

60g tinned white haricot beans, drained
3 tbsp olive oil
120g chorizo sausage cut into 1cm cubes
2 tbsp flat leaf parsley, chopped
Maldon salt
milled black pepper