

## LENTIL SOUP WITH FLAGEOLET BEANS AND SAUSAGE

### *SOUP AUX LENTILLES ET HARICOTS FLAGEOLET Á LA SAUCISSES*

*For a vegan version, skip both the bacon and the sausage and begin, instead, with 1/4 cup olive oil. Your soup will be seasoned well, feel happily full of earthy flavors, and hold you all through a cold night. Add some brown rice for serving and you'll have a complete protein in this one warming bowl, to say nothing of all the colorful vegetable goodness.*

- 1 cup dry [flageolet \(fla-zhoh-LAY\) beans](#) soaked over night or brought to a boil for 2 minutes and rested for an hour afterward (Can sub dry northern white beans or two cans of drained and rinsed white cannellini or Great Northern beans seasoned with a little salt and pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.)
- 3 slices bacon, divided -- one left whole for the beans and two chopped into 1/2-inch pieces to fry up for the lentils
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary or 1 tablespoon dry rosemary
- Freshly ground black pepper and kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon olive oil--or more if needed
- 1 large red onion, chopped
- 2 leeks, white and light green parts only, sliced and then chopped (wash very well)
- 4 medium carrots, diced into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 stalks celery with leaves, diced into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 large, fresh cloves of garlic, finely minced
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 tablespoon Herbes de Provence (Can sub a mixture of dried basil, thyme, oregano)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 cup red wine
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 4 cups (1 quart) low-sodium chicken broth
- 4 cups water or more as needed to keep soup from thickening too much
- 1 pound-- 2 -2 ¼ cups-- [lentils de Puy](#) (imported French green lentils). Can sub American-grown green lentils
- 4-5 fresh Italian sausage links, about a pound--or other pork sausages (smoked is fine, too,)
- Extra virgin olive oil, for garnish--optional
- Minced fresh parsley
- Crusty fresh bread and butter or cheese for serving--optional

**COOK THE FLAGEOLET BEANS WITH BACON, ONION, AND ROSEMARY:** *Skip this step if using canned beans.* Rinse the beans after soaking. Add them, along with the whole piece bacon, onion, rosemary and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper, to a small soup pot or large saucepan. Add water to cover two-inches or a bit more above the beans. Bring to a boil; reduce to simmer. Cook until tender--about an hour, adding 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt half-way through. Set aside to add when the soup is nearly done.

**SAUTE THE BACON AND VEGETABLES; ADD THE HERBS:** In a large heavy soup pot, sauté the two pieces of chopped bacon over medium heat until just done. Pour in the olive oil and heat briefly. Add the vegetables--onion, leeks, carrots, and celery. Cook, stirring, another ten minutes or until softened. Add the garlic, thyme, Herbes de Provence, and bay leaf; cook another minute or two. Pour in wine, scraping up the bottom of the pan, and let cook down 2-3 minutes or until absorbed. Stir in tomato paste.

**POUR IN BROTH AND WATER; ADD/COOK LENTILS:** Pour in the broth and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until lentils are tender--35-45 minutes, adding more water if needed to keep the soup brothy and from getting too thick.

**MEANWHILE, COOK THE SAUSAGES:** Heat a tablespoon olive oil in a non-stick skillet over medium flame and add sausages. Brown well on both sides (don't pierce them), reduce heat and cover until cooked through-- 20-25 minutes, checking to turn again as needed. Remove from heat, let rest two minutes and slice very thinly. Set aside.

**ADD THE BEANS AND SAUSAGES TO THE LENTIL SOUP; SERVE HOT:** Toward the end of cooking, add the cooked, reserved flageolet beans (*or drained, canned white beans*) along with their liquid, onions and rosemary (discarding the piece of bacon you cooked them with --or fry it up and eat later-- along with the rosemary stem. The rosemary leaves will have separated and should be in the beans). Stir in the sliced, cooked sausages. Bring the soup back to a good simmer for 5 minutes, stirring, to marry flavors. Taste and adjust seasonings. Serve hot garnished with a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil, if using, and parsley. Serve with crusty bread and butter or cheese. Whoever gets the bay leaf does the dishes.