

Haricot de Mouton – Braised Lamb with White Beans

This is a traditional French peasant dish: simple and delicious. I nicked the recipe from Linda Dannenberg's [Paris Bistro Cooking](#) and adapted it, so that I could make a dinner for two while still having time to do the evening chores. You can double this recipe, but I would not bother doubling the ingredients in the bouquet garni. If you make six or more servings however, I would increase the contents of the bouquet garni.

I make this recipe with a pot for the beans and a 10" fry-pan that has a lid, so I can fry and braise in the same dish.

For the Beans

- 1 medium onion, diced (about ½ cup)
- 1 Tbs olive oil
- 1 can (15.5 oz) white beans
- 5 cups water

For the Bouquet Garni

- 1 sprig fresh thyme
- 1 sprig fresh parsley
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 medium carrot, diced
- 8 whole cloves
- 1 piece of cheesecloth (12" square) and a piece of kitchen string

For the Lamb

- 1 pound lamb stew meat cut into 1" cubes
- Salt and pepper
- Sugar
- 2 Tbs olive oil
- 1-1/2 Tbs white flour
- 1 cup dry white wine
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp tomato paste
- 1 ripe tomato, coarsely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed with the flat of a knife
- 1 sprig parsley
- 1 sprig thyme
- 1 small bay leaf

1. Sauté the onion in olive oil in a 10" frying pan on high heat, stirring frequently, until just golden (about 3 minutes)
2. Scrape the onion into a 3 quart pot, add the beans (and liquid from the can) and cover with 5 cups of water. Bring to a boil and then cover and reduce heat to low.

3. Put the ingredients for the bouquet garni on the cheesecloth and tie with string. Put the bouquet into the bean pot and allow to simmer with the beans for about 1-1/2 hours.
4. Sprinkle the lamb generously with salt and pepper and lightly with sugar on all sides.
5. Heat the olive oil in the frying pan on high heat and when it is hot, add the meat, distributing it evenly around the pan.
6. Allow the meat to brown well on one side (about 4-5 minutes) before turning once and browning the other side (about 3 minutes)
7. Reduce the heat to low and immediately add the flour, stirring well to avoid having it burn. Stir for about 30 seconds.
8. Add the wine to the pan and continue to stir until the frothing has subsided and the flour is well incorporated in the liquid. Add the water and tomato paste and stir to incorporate.
9. Add the remaining ingredients and cover the pan. Allow the lamb to braise for 20 minutes. At that time, the braising liquid should be fairly thick. Add about a cup of the bean liquid to the braising pan and continue to braise for another 40 minutes or so.
10. Remove the cover from the pan, and take out the thyme and bay leaf. Cook on high until the dish resembles a thick stew.
11. At this point the beans should be done. Remove the bouquet garni and drain the remaining liquid from the beans and add the beans to the lamb, mixing well. Serve immediately.