

Bean Soup with Braised Pork Ribs •

Ingredients

Bean mix, dried	1 lb.	San Marzano tomatoes	28 oz.
Braised pork ribs	2 lb.	Dry red wine	1/2 cup
Chicken stock	6-8 cups	Crystal hot sauce	1 Tbsp.
Bacon fat or Lard	3 Tbsp.	Bay leaves	2
Onions, medium	2	Fresh thyme sprigs	4-5
Carrots, medium	2	White pepper	1 tsp.
Celery stalks	4	Kosher salt	1-2 tsp.
Leeks, medium	2	Black pepper	to taste
Parsnip, medium	1	Dried parsley	2 Tbsp.
Garlic, minced	2 Tbsp.	Salt	1 tsp.
Tomato paste	3 Tbsp.		

Directions

Make the **Braised Pork Ribs** — Soak **beans** overnight in cold water — Pick 2 lbs. **pork** from **ribs** — Dice **onion**, **carrots**, **celery** to 1/2 inch; combine in **Medium Bowl #1** — Grate **parsnip**; set aside in **Small Bowl #1** — Clean and slice **leeks** into 1/2 inch half rounds; set aside in **Medium Bowl #2** — Mince **garlic**; set aside in **Small Bowl #2** — Hand-crush **San Marzano tomatoes** in **Medium Bowl #3**

1. The night before, rinse **beans** thoroughly and place in large bowl. Cover with cold water by 3 inches. Soak for 8-12 hours. Drain before using.
2. Make the **Braised Pork Ribs** according to recipe (*up to 2 days before*). Strain **braising liquid**, removing spent aromatics and herbs. Reserve **rib bones** with any remaining meat attached. Pick 2 lbs. of **meat** from **ribs**, keeping pieces rustic and chunky. Set aside **meat** and **bones** separately.
3. In large Dutch oven or heavy pot (*8+ quart*), heat 3 Tbsp. **fat or lard** over medium heat. Add diced **onion**, **carrots**, **celery** (*Medium Bowl #1*),

leeks (*Medium Bowl #2*), and grated parsnip (*Small Bowl #1*). Sauté for 10-12 minutes until vegetables are softened and beginning to caramelize.

4. Add minced garlic (*Small Bowl #2*) and cook for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Add 3 Tbsp. tomato paste and cook, stirring constantly, for 2-3 minutes until paste darkens and becomes fragrant.
5. Deglaze with 1/2 cup red wine, scraping up any browned bits from bottom of pot. Simmer until wine reduces by half, about 3-4 minutes.
6. Add soaked and drained beans, hand-crushed tomatoes with juices (*Medium Bowl #3*), braising liquid, 1 Tbsp. hot sauce, reserved rib bones, 2 bay leaves, 4-5 thyme sprigs, and 1 tsp. white pepper. Add 6 cups chicken stock.
7. Bring to boil, then reduce to gentle simmer. Cover and cook for 2-2½ hours, stirring occasionally, until beans are completely tender. Add additional stock as needed to maintain thick soup consistency.
8. Remove rib bones (they should be clean or nearly so). Add picked pork and dried parsley. Simmer for 10 minutes to heat through.
9. Taste and adjust seasoning with kosher salt, black pepper, and/or hot sauce.
10. Remove bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Let soup rest for 10-15 minutes before serving—it will thicken as it sits.

Equipment Required

- Dutch oven or heavy pot (8+ quart capacity)
- Large bowl (for soaking beans)
- Fine mesh strainer or colander
- Medium bowl (for crushing tomatoes)
- Sharp knife and cutting board
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Wooden spoon or sturdy spatula
- Ladle
- Storage containers (for leftovers)

Mise en Place

- Soak **beans** the night before—this is essential for even cooking and proper texture
- Strain **braising liquid** ahead of time, removing all aromatics and peppercorns
- Pick all **pork** from **bones** before starting; reserve **bones** separately
- Prepare all vegetables before heating pot—this ensures smooth workflow
- Have **stock** or water measured and ready; you'll add it gradually
- Hand-crush **tomatoes** in bowl before starting to cook

Ingredient Tips

- **Beans:** Overnight soaking is crucial for tender, evenly cooked beans; quick-soak methods don't work as well for this recipe
- **Braising liquid:** Already contains significant **salt**, soy sauce, and Worcestershire—taste before adding more **salt**

- **San Marzano tomatoes:** Use certified DOP if possible; hand-crushing gives better texture than pre-crushed varieties
- **Bacon fat:** Rendered bacon fat adds tremendous flavor; substitute with olive oil or butter if needed
- **Leeks:** Clean thoroughly—slice lengthwise and rinse between layers to remove sand
- **Stock:** Homemade or low-sodium **chicken stock** preferred; water works well given the rich **braising liquid**
- **Wine:** Use a dry red you'd drink; avoid "cooking wine" which contains added **salt**

Preparation Tips

- Take time with vegetable sauté—caramelization builds foundational sweetness and depth
- Bloom **tomato paste** until it darkens and smells sweet; this removes raw taste and concentrates flavor
- Don't rush the **wine** reduction—you want to cook off harsh alcohol while preserving acidity
- Keep **rib bones** in during bean cooking—they continue releasing gelatin for body
- Stir occasionally during long simmer to prevent sticking, but don't over-stir or **beans** will break down
- Add liquid gradually—different bean mixes and **braising liquid** concentrations affect absorption
- Test **beans** for doneness by tasting several; they should be completely tender with no chalky center
- Add **pork** near end to prevent it from becoming tough through extended simmering

- White pepper blooms throughout cooking for integrated heat; black pepper at end for fresh bite
- Let soup rest before serving—flavors meld and consistency thickens naturally
- water or stock to achieve desired consistency
- Taste and re-season after reheating—flavors can mellow

Make Ahead & Storage

- This soup improves significantly overnight as flavors marry; make *1-2 days* ahead if possible
- Store in refrigerator for up to *4 days*; soup will thicken considerably when cold
- To freeze: cool completely, portion into containers, freeze up to *3 months*
- Reheat gently on stovetop, adding

Serving Suggestions

- Serve with crusty artisan bread, cornbread, or buttermilk biscuits for sopping
- Serve on baked potatoes
- Top with grated Parmesan, Pecorino Romano, or aged cheddar
- Garnish with fresh parsley, thyme leaves, or chopped green onions
- Serve with simple green salad dressed with vinaigrette to cut richness