

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	½ 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 **½-inch** — Grate **parsnip** — Clean and slice **leeks** into **½-inch half rounds** — Mince **garlic** — Hand-crush **San Marzano tomatoes** in bowl

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 **fat or lard** over medium heat. Add diced **onion, carrots, celery, leeks**, and **parsnips**. Sauté for **10-12 minutes** until vegetables are softened and beginning to caramelize.

4. Add minced **garlic** and cook for *1-2 minutes* until fragrant. Add **tomato paste** and cook, stirring constantly, for *2-3 minutes* until paste darkens and becomes fragrant.
5. Deglaze with **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, **braising liquid**, **hot sauce**, reserved **rib bones**, **bay leaves**, **thyme sprigs**, and **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