

Italian Chicken Cassoulet

Serves 8

Prep time: 30 mins

Cooking time: 2 Hours

40 ml (8 tsp) black olive tapenade
16 chicken thighs (skin on)
4 garlic bulbs, split vertically
4 fennel bulbs, quartered
150 ml (1/4 pint) olive oil
450 g (1 lb) Toulouse or other spicy sausages
Freshly crushed black peppercorns and sea salt
8 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus extra for garnish
120 ml (8 tbsp) lemon juice (2-3 lemons, squeezed)
900 ml (1 ½ pints) fresh chicken stock
Three 395 g (14 oz) cans cannellini beans, drained
140 g (5 oz) packet prosciutto or Parma ham

1. Put the garlic in a large roasting tin with the fennel and 60 ml (4tbsp) oil. Toss well and roast at 220 C/fan oven 210 C (425 F) Mark 7 for 30 minutes.
2. Tuck 1/2 tsp tapenade under the skin of each chicken thigh; set aside.
3. Heat 45 ml (3 tbsp) oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Fry the chicken in batches, skin-side down, for about 4 minutes until deep brown, then turn over and fry for 1 minute.
4. Put the chicken, skin-side up, in two large roasting tins or wide, shallow flameproof dishes.
5. Lower the heat under the frying pan, add the sausages and brown evenly, Add to the chicken with the roasted fennel and garlic, plenty of seasoning, the rosemary and lemon juice. Drizzle with the remaining olive oil
6. Cook at 220 C/fan over 210 C (425 F) Mark 7 for 45 minutes, swapping the roasting tins around halfway through.
7. Boil the stock and add to the chicken mixture with the cannellini beans. Cool, then chill everything in shallow containers.
8. Carefully remove bones and cut chicken (with skin), sausages and fennel into bite size pieces. Return to oven dishes and freeze.
9. Return to the oven for 15 minutes, then lay the parma ham on top and cook for a further 10 minutes or until the ham is crisp and the chicken is cooked through Separately cook more parma ham till crisp to make sure everyone gets a bit.

Veggie Version of Cassoulet

Spread the tapenade on peeled raw slices of butternut squash.

Omit the chicken and ham.

Substitute spicy veggie sausages for the pork ones.