

Italian Country-Style Beans with Pork

Fagioli alla Contadina

Prep Time	20 minutes	Cook Time	1 hour 30 minutes
Total Time	1 hour 50 minutes	Servings	6

A hearty, rustic Italian bean dish with borlotti beans, pork rind, sausage, pancetta, tomato, and herbs, slowly simmered until rich and comforting.

Ingredients

- 3 cups cooked borlotti beans (about 500 g / 18 oz), drained
- 7 oz (200 g) pork rind / pork skin (cotiche), cleaned and cut into pieces
- 8 oz (225 g) Italian sausage, casing removed and cut into chunks
- 3 oz (85 g) pancetta, diced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, lightly crushed
- 1 small red bell pepper, cut into pieces
- 1 cup (240 ml) tomato passata
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 cups (480 ml) water or light vegetable broth
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small sprig rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/4-1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes, or to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Salt, to taste
- Chopped fresh parsley, for serving

If Using Dried Beans

Use about 9 oz (250 g) dried borlotti beans. Soak overnight, drain, then simmer in fresh water until tender before adding them to the recipe.

Instructions

- 1. Prepare the pork rind.** Place the pork rind in a saucepan of boiling water and cook for 15-20 minutes. Drain, let cool slightly, and cut into bite-size pieces or wide strips.
- 2. Build the soffritto.** Heat the olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-low heat. Add the pancetta and cook for 3-4 minutes, until it begins to release its fat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, and garlic and cook gently for 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 3. Brown the sausage.** Add the sausage pieces and cook for about 5 minutes, turning occasionally. Add the red pepper and cook for another 2-3 minutes.
- 4. Add the tomato.** Stir in the tomato paste and cook for 1 minute. Add the passata, rosemary, bay leaf, oregano, crushed red pepper, and black pepper. Pour in the water or broth and stir well.
- 5. Add the cotiche.** Add the prepared pork rind. Bring to a gentle simmer, partially cover, and cook over low heat for about 40 minutes, until the pork rind becomes tender.
- 6. Add the beans.** Stir in the cooked borlotti beans. Simmer uncovered for another 25-30 minutes, stirring gently from time to time. Add a splash of hot water if the mixture becomes too dry.
- 7. Rest and serve.** Remove the rosemary and bay leaf. Taste and adjust the salt only at the end. Turn off the heat and let the beans rest for 10 minutes. Finish with chopped parsley and a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil.

Nonna's Tips

- **Cook it slowly.** Gentle simmering develops the deep, rustic flavor.
- **Borlotti are ideal.** Their creamy texture works especially well with pork and tomato.
- **Salt at the end.** Pancetta and sausage already bring plenty of seasoning.
- **Make it spicy.** Add extra peperoncino, or 1-2 teaspoons of 'nduja for a Calabrian touch.
- **Let it rest.** The flavor and texture improve after 10 minutes off the heat, and it is even better the next day.

Serving Suggestion

Serve hot with rustic Italian bread, grilled country bread, focaccia, or friselle. For an old-fashioned presentation, place toasted bread in the bottom of the bowl and spoon the beans and sauce over it.

Storage

Refrigerate leftovers in an airtight container for up to 3 days. Reheat gently with a splash of water or broth. The dish can also be frozen for up to 2 months.

Nutrition Facts

Per serving	Approximate amount
Calories	480 kcal
Protein	25 g
Carbohydrates	35 g
Fat	27 g
Saturated Fat	9 g
Fiber	9 g
Sugar	6 g
Sodium	850 mg

Nutrition values are estimates and vary depending on the sausage, pancetta, pork rind, and beans used.