

Barley Stew with Beans, Mushrooms & Sausage

Serves 6

The recipe is very forgiving. If you did not cook the barley or beans long enough, simmer the stew longer, adding water or broth as needed.

4 ounces dried white beans
soaked overnight in water to
cover

Kosher salt

8 ounces pearl barley, soaked
overnight in water to cover

1 quart low-sodium chicken
broth, or as needed

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

4 tablespoons olive oil

½ pound assorted mushrooms,
sliced

½ pound fresh sweet pork
sausage

2 ounces bacon or pancetta,
chopped

1 large onion, chopped

1 or 2 carrots, peeled and
chopped

1 rib celery, chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

1 bay leaf

3 sage leaves, chopped

1 ounce dried porcini, soaked
in hot water for 30 minutes

¼ pound diced prosciutto (op-
tional)

Freshly ground black pepper

Chopped flat-leaf parsley (op-
tional)

**Montasio or Parmesan cheese,
for grating (optional)**

Instructions: Drain the soaked beans, place in a small saucepan and cover with fresh cold water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer the beans gently until tender, about 30 minutes. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt during the last 15 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Transfer barley and its soaking water to another saucepan, add 2 cups of the chicken broth and 1 teaspoon salt and simmer until barley is tender but still has some chewiness. (Add more water if the barley absorbs all of the liquid and is still too firm.) This will take about 45 minutes or a bit longer. Set aside.

Melt the butter along with a tablespoon of the oil in a saute pan over medium-high heat. Add the mushrooms and saute until tender, about 3 minutes. Set aside.

Steam the sausage in another pan with a little water until cooked through. When cool enough to handle, cut into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick rounds. (Cut them into smaller

pieces if you are planning to serve this as a soup.) Remove to a plate and set aside.

Heat remaining oil in a stew pot or large saute pan over medium heat. Sauté the bacon along with the onion and carrots and celery for about 10 minutes or until onion is tender. Add garlic, herbs, beans, barley and any simmering liquid and remaining chicken broth and simmer for 10 minutes.

Strain the porcini through a coffee filter, reserving the liquid. Chop the porcini. Add the mushrooms, porcini and their strained soaking liquids, the sausage and prosciutto, if using, and simmer for 10 minutes longer to blend the flavors. Add more liquid if needed. Season with pepper and salt to taste.

Serve the stew in warmed bowls. Sprinkle with parsley and grated Montasio or Parmesan cheese if you like.

Per serving: 463 calories, 19 g protein, 49 g carbohydrate, 22 g fat (6 g saturated), 29 mg cholesterol, 833 mg sodium, 11 g fiber.