

Recipe for cold miserable weather: Pork Pottage
Pat Dillon, Parish Clerk



This recipe for pork pottage is based roughly on something I ate and hugely enjoyed a few years ago in the café in the National Trust property, Oxborough Hall in Norfolk [well worth a visit – it has a moat and a ‘priest’s hole’, as well as fantastic walks and a great café].

Their recipe was supposedly Elizabethan and hence the sweet spices and sweetness of the meaty dish.

It has been argued that, in those days, the spiciness and sweetness of Elizabethan meat dishes was intended to disguise the taste of meat going off! However, in these days of freezers the latter is less likely to happen, and yet the spicy sweetness remains seductive, and I suspect is an aspect of Elizabethan cooking that still has an appeal.

The recipe is, effectively, a soupy stew or a stewy soup, depending on how much meat and liquid you want to put in it. The recipe below is for a stewy version, but feel free to cut this down into a soup.

Vegans and vegetarians may want to replace the pork with tofu or chick peas etc., and the chicken stock with vegetable stock.

It would be great to have these variations on the website!

Pork Pottage: Recipe

Ingredients

Pork fillet 300gr
3 leeks [use 2.5 of these and reserve 0.5 for garnish]
Split red lentils 125gr
Olive oil 2 tbs – or a good glug
4 sticks celery
3 cloves of garlic
1 cooking apple, peeled seeded and chopped
1 teaspoon dried ginger

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0.25 teaspoon mixed spice

0.25 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 pint [500 litres] chicken stock [or veg/herb stock]

Enthusiastic grind of black pepper [to taste]

Extra salt to taste, but you should not need any because of the stock.

[NB. You can add in cider or apple juice, but just need to trade off the quantities with the recommended chicken/apple juice/ veg stock amounts, because you do not want the result to be too sloppy, and you will have to make adjustments for the sweetness if using industrial apple juice.]

Cooking instructions

Boil red lentils without salt until soft but not dissolved [c20 mins] – drain through a sieve and reserve.

Chop leeks in circles

Chop celery in small 'u' shaped pieces

Peel and chop cooking apple

Chop garlic finely

'Sweat' the garlic, leeks, and celery at a very low heat, so that nothing is browned.

Turn up heat a bit [but no browning] and add the chopped meat.

Stir until the meat is beginning to turn white

Add spices, chopped apple, and cooked lentils [NB. By all means put more/different spices in if you want].

Simmer for c 2-3hrs until the pork is soft and beginning to fall apart. The timing depends on what bits of pig you use. I like to use tenderloin, which cooks quicker, and the desired result happens within c2hrs, but if you use other cuts then it may take longer.

Dish Out/Serving Suggestions

Dish out into bowls with spoons to eat it with, and some nice, fresh or hot bread on the side, plus a side dish of very thinly sliced celery and leek/green herbs, to sprinkle on the top of the soup/stew.

Additional Suggestions

Sprinkle with smoked paprika [hot], or mild paprika and chives.

Dollop of natural yoghurt or cream in each bowl.