

LUXURY BORDERLAND CASSOULET

A contemporary and playful take on the classic bean and meat stew of South West France, full of incredible flavours and textures. Perfect to feed a crowd.

This Collaborative dish was created by Marwan Badran of Mouth.Events and Annie Nichols of Hot Meals Now to celebrate the diversity of Suffolk/Norfolk borderland produce. Using micro vegetables, herbs and flowers from Nurtured in Norfolk; pork and chorizo from Marsh Pig Charcuterie; beans, barley and Carmelina seeds from Hodmedod; extra virgin olive oil, Oak Smoked, Lemon and Truffle Cold pressed rapeseed oil Infusions from Yare Valley Oils and Butter from Old Hall Farm Dairy.

Serves 12-15

For the stew

1 x 3kg Black Spot shoulder of pork, sweet cured with fennel seeds, chilli & bay, cured by the butcher or at home

1 kg beans, we used a mix whole fava beans of Black Badger Carlin Peas, soaked separately overnight in plenty of cold water to cover

250 g Sprouted Barley

3 litres mixed veal and chicken stock, made with fresh fennel

100 g butter

8 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Smoked rapeseed oil to brush the pork before roasting ...

500 g mix of field and chestnut mushrooms

8 red onions, peeled but left whole

2 heads fennel, cored and chopped roughly

4 whole Smoked Chorizo, skinned, and each cut on the diagonal, into 5 pieces

500 g pancetta, cut into large lardons

For the sofrito

3 large white onions, finely chopped

8 garlic cloves, very finely chopped

4 carrots, finely chopped

6 celery stalks, finely chopped

2 heads of fennel, cored and finely chopped

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

3 tablespoons Oak Smoked Oil Infusion

For the Salsa Verde

Large handful each of basil and flat leaf parsley

Small handful each of dill, mint, fennel tops, wild garlic, sorrel and tarragon

8 garlic cloves, roughly chopped

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

4 tablespoons Lemon Oil

Juice and zest of 2 lemons
3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

To finish

2 large head spring greens, leaves separated and washed
500 g mix of baby beetroot, turnips and purple carrots, trimmed and scrubbed, but left whole
Large handful whole Sorrel leaves
4 tablespoons Camelina seeds
a handful of Fennel flowers
2 tablespoons truffle oil, optional
sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

Method

1. Two or three days before, cure the pork shoulder in a sweet brine with fennel, anise, fenugreek, bay leaves and dried chilli flakes.
2. Preheat oven 120 C. Rinse the pork and pat dry with paper towel. Place the pork in a large roasting tray brushed in Smoked Rapeseeds oil and roast very slowly for 5-6 hours or until falling off the bone. When cool enough to handle pull away from the bones and break into large chunks.
3. When you are ready to cook the Cassoulet, drain the beans, rinse well and tip into separate pots. Cover with fresh water, bring both to a boil, skimming off any scum that rises to the surface, reduce heat and simmer for 1- 1/2 hours, or until tender. Remove from heat, leave in water till cool, then drain, keeping the water.
4. To make the Mushroom Caviar, roughly break the mushrooms directly into the bowl of a food processor and whiz until very finely chopped (you may need to do this in batches). Melt the butter with 2 tablespoons of the olive oil for the stew, in a large pan, add the finely chopped mushrooms and cook over a medium-low heat until the mixture reduces down. Water will start to come out of the mushrooms but carry on cooking until all the liquid has evaporated, stirring frequently for about 20-30 minutes or until the mushrooms are dark and rich in colour like caviar. Remove from heat and set aside.
5. For the sofrito, heat 6 tablespoons of the olive oil with the oak smoked oil in a large pan. Add the finely chopped onion, garlic, carrot, celery and fennel and cook over a low-medium heat for 15-20 minutes (but do not brown), stirring regularly until softened. Add the soaked beans and the stock, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer gently for an hour. Add the mushroom caviar and sprouted barley and simmer for a further ½ hour.
6. Whilst the beans are cooking, preheat oven to 200C. Tip the whole red onions into a large roasting tin with the roughly chopped fennel. Drizzle over 4 tablespoons of the olive oil and add a pinch of salt flakes. Toss well and roast for about 30-40 minutes, shaking the tin once or twice, until very tender. Set aside.

7. To make the Salsa Verde, remove the leaves from all the herbs and drop them into the bowl of a food processor with the garlic cloves. Whiz until very finely chopped, then pour in half of the oils and whizz again. Scrape out into a bowl, and stir in the remaining oil, lemon zest and juice and vinegar and season to taste.

8. Blanch the greens and baby vegetables in lightly salted water. Drain and refresh in plenty of cold water, then drain well again. In a large frying pan, pan fry the pieces of smoked chorizo for 5 minutes, turning occasionally, then set aside.

9. To serve, preheat oven to 190 C. Add the sorrel leaves, roasted fennel, red onions, wilted greens, baby vegetables, pork and chorizo pieces to the bean and mushroom mixture. Fold all together, adding some of the reserved bean cooking water if needed to make a wet mixture. Divide the mixture evenly between 2 large oven proof dishes or roasting tins, place in oven and bake for 30-40 minutes until hot and bubbling.

To serve

Drizzle over the truffle oil, if using, spoon over the salsa verde and sprinkle with the Carmelina seeds and fennel flowers.