



Portuguese Azorean Fennel Soup (Sopa de Funcho)

Ingredients

2 – 15.5 ounce cans of white kidney beans or one and a half cups of dried white beans. If you choose to use the dried beans you will need to soak the beans in water overnight; filling the pot 2 inches above the dried beans before soaking.

1 pound of salted pork ribs or ham hocks; if fresh unsalted pork is used rub the pork with coarse salt and chill overnight. About 3 tablespoons of salt should be used for the rub.



8 cups of water
4 tablespoons of olive oil, virgin or non-virgin
1 medium onion, finely chopped
6 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 cup of finely chopped scallions, use the entire scallion both the dark green and white bulb
1 large bay leaf
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
3 large russet potatoes, peeled and chopped into 3/4 to 1 inch cubes; about 3 cups
2 cups of chopped green cabbage; for a slightly more fennel flavor the cabbage could be replaced with 2 cups of chopped romaine lettuce hearts
2 bunches (about 2 cups) of “Common” fennel leaves finely chopped or 2 “Florence” fennel bulbs chopped into 1/4 inch by 1/4 inch pieces (about 2 cups)
1/2 pound or 1 small link of Portuguese sausage; leave the sausage whole

Preparation

In a 4 or 6 quart stock pot heat the olive oil. Once the oil is heated add the chopped garlic and onions and sauté for 5 minutes. Place the pork (wipe any excess salt from the pork) and sauté the meat for about 10 minutes making sure that it is turned often and mixed with the chopped onions and garlic. Add the water



and the beans. If using the canned beans you need not drain the liquid. If using the soaked beans drain the water before placing them into the pot. Cover and place on high heat and allow to boil. Once boiling starts, reduce the heat to low-medium and simmer until the meat is tender (the meat should be easily pulled with a fork). If the soaked beans were used, they will be cooked when they can easily be mashed. The meat and the beans normally take about 1 hour to cook.

If using the “Common” fennel; trim and discard the coarse stems and finely chop the feathery fennel leaves. If using the Florence fennel bulbs remove the outer coarse layer of the bulbs. Finely slice the bulb into 1/4 vertical slices and then cut into 1/2 in pieces.

To the stock pot add the scallions, bay leaf, black pepper, cubed potatoes, chopped cabbage or lettuce, the chopped fennel and the whole uncut sausage. Return the soup to boil, once it starts boiling reduce the heat to low-medium and continue to simmer until the potatoes are done and the cabbage is soft. The potatoes are done when they are easily pierced with a fork. It should take between 20 and 30 minutes for the soup to be cooked. At this point if needed add additional salt to taste. Depending on your stove temperature controls a higher amount of broth may evaporate. If this is the case just add several cups of water towards the end of the cooking time and allow the soup to come to a boil once more. Once boiling starts, the heat should be turned off as the soup is done.

After the soup is done remove the sausage and slice into 1/4 inch round pieces and place a few pieces into each bowl of soup being served. Serve with your favorite crunchy crusty bread.

There you have it! Portuguese Azorean fennel soup, the island way!