

## Lentil and Pork Sausage cooking class, Dec. 28, 2020



- All cultures have rituals for welcoming the beginning of a new year.
- Italy is no exception. New Year's Eve in Italy is a very special celebration for families. As in all Italian meals, food is the focal point on "*La Festa di San Silvestro*" or "*Sera di Capo di Anno*".
- Families and friends gather at a large table to share their thoughts about the previous year's blessings and optimism for the coming year.
- Italians Celebrate by eating one very important food: *Lentils*, which are the star of the meal because lentils are thought to bring good luck, fortune, and prosperity in the year to come. The round shape of the lentils resembles Roman coins and symbolizes prosperity.
- In Northern Italy the dish is served with cotechino (*co.te.ki.no*), a spicy pork sausage which is native to the region. Pork is thought to be lucky for abundance, prosperity and wealth. And a drizzling of good olive oil on top of the lentils is said to bring good health.
- Lentils are served in different ways all over Italy. In Northern Italy the dish is served with native to the region, called "*cotechino*" sausages. Pork is **thought to be lucky for abundance, prosperity and wealth because it's so fatty and rich.** Also drizzling some good olive oil on top of the lentils is also said to bring good health! Shall we begin.

## Ingredients

¼ cup olive oil  
1 large yellow onion chopped (about 1 ½ cup)  
2 large carrots (about 1 ½ cups)  
2-3 celery ribs (about 1 ½ cups) (include leaves they are packed with flavor)  
4 cloves of garlic minced  
2 cups dried lentils (green or brown best)  
1 14 oz crushed tomatoes (use San Marzano tomatoes)  
6 cups chicken or vegetable stock (can also use half water and half stock)  
2-3 bay leaves  
¼ teaspoon oregano and thyme  
Salt and pepper to taste  
1-2 links pork sausage (more if you plan to serve a sausage per person)  
¼ cup chopped fresh parsley for garnish  
Drizzle extra virgin olive oil over dish after adding sausage  
1-2 Tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice (optional)

## Instructions

1. Rinse the lentils with cold water twice and set aside.
2. In a large pot, heat olive oil over medium-high heat.
3. Prepare onions, carrots, celery (these 3 items are referred to Soffritto, used as a cooking base to add flavor to sauces, soups and stews).
4. Add garlic and onion to hot oil and sauté for 2-3 minutes.
5. Add the diced carrots and celery and sauté for about 10 minutes until softened. Don't rush this step, as it is key to the flavor base of the soup.
6. Add crushed tomatoes and sauté for a minute or two.
7. Add the chicken stock, lentils, bay leaves, spices, and salt and pepper.
8. Turn up heat and bring to boil then reduce heat to medium low, cover and simmer for about 45 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lentils are soft.
9. When soup is almost cooked, sauté the sausage in a frying pan. Make sure all sides are browned.
10. Remove the bay leaves, add lemon juice if using.
11. Cut sausage into slices (resembling coins) and place on top of soup, sprinkle with fresh parsley and lightly drizzle with extra virgin olive oil.

## **Tips**

- Always rinse and sort your lentils to remove any impurities, but no need to soak.
- Dice carrots, onions and celery the same size for even cooking.
- For garnish parsley stems is a wonderful flavor enhancer.
- Can add chopped spinach or kale at end of cooking.
- This recipe works well for a crock pot (slow cooking for hours) or a pressure-cooker or Instant pot (cooks in about 30 minutes).
- Soup becomes even better the next day. Add a little water, if too thick and reheat.
- Store in frig for about 5 days or in freezer for weeks.