

GARBURE ROUGE ‡

Garbure is a thick soup or stew of pork, cabbage, other vegetables, cheese, and stale bread, traditionally thick enough to be eaten with a fork. Its origin is purported to be the Béarn region of Gascony, in Southwestern France. Being a peasant dish adapted to the needs and resources of the household that prepares it, there are many variations, depending on the time of year, what ingredients are available, and where in Gascony it is made. One thing they all have in common, however, is that the ladle stands erect, on its own, when brought to table. Some demand that it include preserved meats, such as goose (confit d'oise).

My preparation is perhaps less elaborate than those of Gascony, whose citizens might even scoff of it being called Garbure, without the preserved goose. Nevertheless, the recipe given below, based on several published recipes of the dish, is an outstanding meal for a winter's evening, whatever one may wish to call it. It is made with red vegetables, and thus its name. The tomatoes are atypical, but provide a hint of Provence.

¼ lb smoked pork jowl, rendered and diced¹

1 tbsp olive oil

1 large red onion

2 tsp garlic purée

1 large carrot, diced

1 cup celery, diced

1 red bell pepper, sliced thin

2 red potatoes, in ½" cubes

½ head red cabbage, chopped

1 medium turnip, in ½" cubes

1 (15-oz) can unsalted diced tomatoes

¼ cup red wine

2 tsp low-sodium beef bouillon base

2 cups water

1 lb low-fat turkey smoked sausage, in ½" pieces

1 (15-oz) can pinto beans

¼ fresh ground pepper

1 bay leaf

¼ tsp dried thyme

¼ tsp dried marjoram

1 tbsp ground New Mexico chile

4 oz grated Parmesan cheese

Place the rendered pork jowl, onion, and oil in a deep sauce pan and cook until the onions have just begun to brown. Add garlic, carrot, celery, potatoes, and bell pepper and continue to cook, about 2 to 3 minutes, stirring well during the time. Add the cabbage and turnip and continue to cook another 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the remaining ingredients, except the cheese, bring to a simmer, and cook until potatoes and cabbage are just tender, about 10 minutes.

Serve in bowls with about a tablespoon of Parmesan sprinkled over.

Makes about 10 cups.

¹How To Cook Bacon, page 10.