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Sausage & Borlotti Casserole

I first cooked this recipe on holiday in Tuscany after reading it in the Italian version of Hello! It says a bit about Italian priorities.

8 Tuscan sausages (not the fatty English things with rusk and floor sweepings)
400 - 450g part cooked (on the firm side) or tinned borlotti beans

450g carrots

175g quick cook polenta

1 onion

3 tbsps olive oil

2 garlic cloves

1 celery heart

2 leeks

1 cooking apple (or substitute leeks and apple for a tin plum tomatoes)

200 ml white wine (Trentino or Viña Sol)

150 ml stock

bay leaf

50g butter

100g Grana Padano or Parmigiano, grated

3 tbsps chopped flat leaf parsley

seasoning

Peel and chop the onion, garlic and leeks. Peel, trim and dice the carrots. Heat the oil in a large, deep pan. Add the sausages and quickly brown all over, then add the onion, garlic, carrots, celery and leeks. Stir well and cook for 10 minutes until everything is beginning to soften and brown. Meanwhile, peel, core and chop the apple. Add the wine, stock, apple, bay leaf and some salt and pepper.

Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, until the sausages are cooked through and the vegetables are tender. Tip the Borlotti beans into a sieve and rinse under cold running water. Add the beans to the pan and cook for 10 minutes. Check the polenta cooking instructions and cook to co-ordinate with the sausages. When the polenta is ready, beat in the butter and cheese and season, adding plenty of freshly ground black pepper.

Stir in most of the parsley, reserving a little to garnish the finished dish. To serve, divide the polenta between four large, shallow bowls and spoon over the sausage and vegetable mixture, then spoon over the juices and garnish with the reserved parsley. This dish reheats perfectly. Serves 8.

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