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# Cotechino con Lenticchie

*Cotechino* or *zampone* are traditionally served carved on a bed of lentils in Italy on New Year's Eve where the sausage is for luck and the lentils signify money in the coming year. Slow cooking is essential so that the cotechino does not harden and the meat and fat is rendered moist and gelatinous which is what makes cotechino different from other sausage.

a 350g to 500g fresh cotechino  
300-400g Castelluccio or Puy lentils  
30g butter

1 onion finely chopped  
60g pancetta, chopped  
2 sticks of celery finely chopped  
1 carrot finely chopped  
a few sage or thyme leaves

Trapani sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

Rinse the lentils a few times or soak in lukewarm water overnight with a pinch of bicarbonate of soda. Sauté the onion, carrot and celery gently in butter and olive oil with chopped pancetta in a lidded casserole until softened. Prick the cotechino (if fresh) with a pin in a few places then place the cotechino on top of the lentils then add water or a mixture of white wine and water then pop in a slow cooker, hay box or bottom oven on very low for 6-8hrs until the lentils are tender and have absorbed all the water and juice from the cotechino but not brown. When ready serve the lentils onto a warmed platter and slice the cotechino at the table.

Nice with Barbera or Ghemme. Serves 4.

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