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Sausage Minestrone

Half soup and half sausage hotpot, this main course winter bean and vegetable soup is served with pan-fried sausages and grated Parmigiano. If you use English sausage be sure they are at least 95% meat and don't contain rusk or bread, which holds the fat, otherwise you'll get a soup that is thick and greasy.

4 to 6 Squisito Italian sausages - pork, wild boar, venison, merguez or chorizo

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 waxy potatoes, diced
- 2 carrots, diced
- 2 celery stalks, finely sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400g canned tomatoes, chopped
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 litre water
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 1/2 a cauliflower
- 1 courgette
- 200g greens
- 400g tinned cannellini, fagioli or borlotti beans
- 2 tbsp flat parsley leaves
- 2 tbsp grated Parmigiano

Heat the olive oil in a heavy saucepan and cook the onion gently until soft. Add the potatoes, carrots, celery and garlic, and toss well to coat in the onions. Add the tomatoes, tomato purée, water and stock, and bring to the boil. Simmer, partly covered, for 45 minutes.

In the meantime, cut the cauliflower into small florets. Cut the courgette in half lengthways and thickly slice. Discard thick stalks of the spring greens and wash the leaves. Stack the leaves, roll into a cigar shape and thickly slice. Drain and rinse the white beans. Add the cauliflower, spring greens, courgette and white beans to the pan and simmer for 20 minutes or until vegetables are tender.

Pan-fry the sausages in a little oil in a frying pan until evenly browned. Drain and slice thickly on the diagonal. Reheat the soup and divide between warmed soup bowls. Add the sausages, pushing them into the soup a little, and scatter with parsley leaves and grated Parmigiano.

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