

## **Chunky pheasant and bean soup**

A great use for leftover pheasant, though you could use any poultry or game bird. I use organic pinto beans, but any dried bean will do. If pushed for time, use drained, canned beans. Serves two to three.

**150g dried pinto or borlotti beans, soaked overnight**  
**2 tbsp olive oil**  
**1 onion, peeled and finely chopped**  
**2 sticks celery, finely chopped**  
**1 large carrot, peeled**  
**and finely chopped**  
**2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped**  
**1 small glass white wine**  
**Cooked pheasant meat, roughly chopped or shredded (about 200g)**  
**500ml stock (chicken, game or vegetable) and/or cooking juices from the pheasant**  
**1 bay leaf**  
**1 sprig thyme (optional)**  
**Salt and ground black pepper**  
**Extra-virgin olive oil**

Drain the beans. Put them in a pan, cover with water, bring up to a boil, turn down the heat and simmer until tender - around an hour, but it will depend on the variety and freshness of the beans. Drain and set aside.

Heat the olive oil in a large, heavy-based pan. Add the onion, celery, carrot and garlic, and sweat down until soft - 10-12 minutes. Add the wine and simmer until reduced by about half. Add the cooked beans, the pheasant, the stock and herbs, bring to a simmer and cook for 10-20 minutes, just to help the beans absorb the flavours.

Remove the bay leaf and thyme, if using. You now need partially to blend the soup so it thickens up but remains nice and chunky. The easiest way to do this is to plunge a stick blender into the pot and give a few blitzes. Alternatively, take out a couple of mugfuls of the soup, blend in a processor and return to the pan. Failing that, just mash the beans a bit with a potato masher. Season well and serve, piping hot, with a generous slosh of very good olive oil on top and some bread.

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