

# Frenchman's Franks & Beans

*1 T olive oil*  
*1 large leek*  
*1 stalk of celery, diced*  
*2 carrots, diced*  
*2 or 3 sprigs of thyme*  
*1 sprig of rosemary*  
*1 bay leaf*  
*1 small to medium russet potato,*  
*peeled and quartered*  
**stock or water**  
*1 cup puy lentils*  
*bunch of fresh spinach, chopped fine*  
**salt & pepper**  
*3 T balsamic or other vinegar*  
*1 lb. (4) sausages (optional for vegetarians)*



Trim and clean the leek, concentrating on the white and pale part, and cutting it into a small dice. (Reserve some of the dark green part for later.) Put in a heavy bottomed sauce pan with olive oil and the celery and carrot, and cook until the leeks have gone soft, about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, make a bundle of the herbs and tie it inside the reserved dark green leek with some kitchen string, add it and the potato, and the lentils to the pot, and cover with water or stock (or both). Simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes, monitoring to make sure the water doesn't completely boil away before the lentils are tender but chewy.

Pierce the sausages with a fork, and cook them in a little simmering water, covered, for 5 or 10 minutes. Remove the lid, and let the water evaporate. If the sausages don't shed enough grease while they are simmering, add a little butter or olive oil, and, turning frequently, brown over medium low heat.

When the lentils are tender, remove the herb bundle, and mash

the potato (now softened) on the side of the pan to thicken the sauce. Add the chopped spinach and let it all cook down for another 5 minutes. Remove from the heat, taste for seasoning, and add the vinegar. Slice the sausages, and serve on top of the lentils.

One serving of the lentils is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup, and is 3 points. One Whole Foods chicken sausage with basil and sun dried tomatoes is 4 points.

---

## Lentils with Balsamic Vinegar



Photo by WordRidden, on Flickr.

This is a great side dish, or with rice, and maybe a sliced sausage or two, a main dish. You can make it completely vegetarian starting off with olive oil, and simmering with vegetable stock or water, or, if you don't mind a little meat, start off with a few slices of bacon and simmer in chicken stock. Add more stock or water if you want it more soupy, or hold back and monitor it while it simmers if you want it dryer. It's based on a recipe I half-remember from *Cooks Illustrated*. It uses french lentils, which are the little dark green ones, sometimes called "puy lentils," since they hold

their shape better. You can either buy them prepackaged, or head over to the bulk aisle, and buy it by the pound.

*2 T **olive oil**, or the drippings from 3 slices of bacon, fried*

*1 small **onion**, diced (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)*

*2 cloves of **garlic**, chopped or sliced*

*2 **carrots**, diced (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup)*

*1 **bay leaf***

*1 teaspoon dried **thyme***

*1 cup **french green lentils***

*1 16 oz can of **tomatoes**, whole or diced*

*1-2 cups **chicken stock**, vegetable stock, or water*

*1 tablespoon **balsamic vinegar***

***salt and pepper***

**Resist the urge to add salt in the beginning, which tends to make the lentils tough.**

If you're starting with the bacon, chop into  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch slices, and render the drippings in a medium sized saucepan (one that you have a tight lid). Remove the bacon once it's browned and reserve for later – OR – heat the olive oil and add the onions and carrots, allowing the onions to become translucent, and the carrots to soften a little. Add the garlic, the spices, the lentils, and the tomatoes, along with a little of the juice. Clamp on the lid and lower the heat, and let the mixture steam, stirring occasionally, for about 20 minutes. Add the stock or water, and let simmer for 20 or 30 more minutes, until the lentils are tender. Just before serving, add the balsamic and the salt and pepper (and top with the reserved bacon if you haven't already eaten it all while you were cooking.)