

Yield: 4 to 5 one-cup servings. Allow 60 minutes active time for peeling, chopping and sautéing, plus 4 hours for cooking. Leftover stew may be refrigerated or frozen.

Ham hocks may be omitted for a vegetarian stew. Fava beans are the same thing as broad beans. The cooked beans will be slightly crunchy with a rich, earthy taste.

It's easy to start peeling a soaked bean with a blunt knife (dinner knife) or a thumbnail. Most of the time the covering will slip right off. It takes from 4 to 8 seconds to peel a bean and there are 200 beans in 8 ounces of dry beans; therefore, the peeling process will take one person between 13 and 25 minutes.

Adapted from noteatingoutinny.com/2011/02/09/hearty-fava-bean-stew/ and saveur.com/article/Recipes/Fava-Bean-Stew-with-Garlic-Thyme-and-Bay-Leaves. This version © 2015 ArtChester.net.

FAVA / BROAD BEAN STEW

Ingredients

8 ounces (=227 grams =1 cup) dried fava/broad beans, soaked overnight (12 to 24 hours)
2 to 3 Tb (30 to 45 ml) olive oil
1 large carrot, coarsely chopped
2 celery stalks, coarsely chopped
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 can (approx. 15 ounces = 425 grams) diced peeled tomatoes
6 ounces (170 grams) baby bella (cremini) mushrooms, rinsed, stems trimmed & quartered
1 bunch fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) dried oregano
½ teaspoon (2.5 ml) dried marjoram
1 cup (235 ml) dry white wine
2 cups (470 ml) chicken or vegetable stock
2 ham hocks (smoked ham shanks), approx.. 1.5 pounds (680 grams)
2 to 3 Tb (30 to 45 ml) all-purpose flour
Seasonings to taste: salt, ground black pepper, and a small amount of shichimi red pepper
1 fresh baguette and butter

Preparation

Cover dried fava/broad beans with several inches of water and soak overnight, changing the water at least once. Drain and rinse. Peel the maroon-colored beans and discard the leathery covering, yielding an off-white squarish bean. Some of them may split during peeling. Put into a pot and cover with 3 inches of water. Bring to a boil and begin to cook uncovered while doing other preparation.

Chop all veggies. In a large stock pot, heat olive oil. Add the onion, carrot and celery and sauté until soft, about 6 minutes. Add garlic and cook another minute. Add the mushrooms and sauté another minute. Add the white wine and increase heat to let boil, while stirring, for a minute or so. Add tomatoes, stock, bay leaf, oregano, marjoram and half the bunch of thyme, secured with string.

Pour the beans and their water into a colander with a bowl beneath it to catch the bean water. Add the beans to the stock pot, then add the ham hocks. Pour the bean water back into the bean pot and keep it on the stove; this will be used to replenish the stock pot to keep the ham hocks covered with liquid.

Cook the stock pot with a loose cover, stirring occasionally. Add bean liquid to keep ham hocks covered; use water if bean liquid is exhausted. After 3 hours of cooking remove the thyme bunch and the bay leaf and discard. Remove the ham hocks, remove their skin and bone and discard. Chop the ham meat into ½" (1 cm) dice and add back into the stock pot. Add seasonings to taste.

After another half hour, remove a ladle of liquid. Put in a small bowl and blend with flour to form a paste. Add back into the stock pot and stir to dissolve. This will thicken the stew as may be desired. It will be necessary to stir more frequently to prevent sticking. Strip leaves from the remainder of the thyme and stir them into the stock pot. Continue cooking for another half hour.

Slice a fresh baguette, making diagonal slices. Ladle one cup portions into soup bowls. Serve with baguette slices and butter (one baguette will suffice for 4 persons).