

September Recipe

Boston Baked Beans with Pork Belly

Boston is known as 'Beantown', because this dish has been one of the most favoured there since colonial days, when molasses was America's primary sweetener. Boston used to be a huge producer of molasses, due to the local rum industry (sugar cane was grown in the West Indies and shipped to Boston to be made into rum). The Great Molasses Flood is probably the stickiest disaster in history: in 1919 a massive flood of molasses broke out of a storage tank and swept through a large part of the city, wreaking havoc and causing dozens of deaths. It is said that on hot days you can still smell the molasses seeping out of the pavements.

SERVES 4-6



10 handfuls of dried white haricot beans soaked overnight
2 small onions peeled and chopped
2 cloves of garlic peeled and finely chopped
2 tsp mustard powder
1 scant tbsp salt
1-2 tbsp molasses depending on how much you like the flavour
1 tbsp raw cane sugar
1 good grind of fresh black pepper
500g / 1lb 2oz piece boneless, rindless belly of pork

Drain and thoroughly rinse the beans, then pour into a large pot with a lid. Cover with plenty of water and place on a medium heat. Bring to the boil and simmer for 30 minutes. Skim off any foam and discard. Change the water, reduce the heat slightly and bring back to the boil. Continue to bubble for a further 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 120°C / 250°F / Gas Mark 1/2.

Make sure there is enough liquid to cover the beans, then stir in all the ingredients, lastly embedding the pork into the beans. Cover with a lid and pop in the oven for 8 hours. Excellent with a fry-up, with extra black pudding, please. Or with a baked potato and salad. Something fresh and crunchy.