PORTUGUESE BEAN SOUP

From Chef Doug Silva of Silva's Sheldon Inn is this old family recipe for Portuguese Bean Soup. Red beans are a mainstay of Portuguese cuisine, and this soup is a mainstay at Silva's Sheldon Inn in Elk Grove. It's easy to make at home in a big soup pot.

4 cups red beans
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 pound good linguiça sausage, sliced
1 cup chopped onion
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspooon paprika
½ teaspoon chili power
6 bay leaves
½ cup red wine vinegar
½ cup red wine
8 to 10 cups homemade chicken stock
1 cup tomato puree
2 cups chopped kale, leaves only

1. Rinse and soak the beans overnight.

2. Saute linguiça in olive oil to lightly brown. Add onion and garlic and continue to sauté until onion is transparent but not brown. Add all spices and stir to coat the onions and linguiça. Add vinegar and wine, stir and let reduce just to cook off the alcohol. Stir in tomato puree. Add chicken stock and the drained beans; let soup simmer, uncovered, until the beans are tender, about 2 hours. You can add more hot chicken stock at this point if the soup is still thick.

When ready to serve sauté the kale in a little olive oil, then add to the soup. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

The soup is best served on the second day. The flavors bend and the soup thickens slightly. Serve with crusty French bread