

RED LENTIL SOUP

I've experimented with various lentil soup recipes, adapting them for my current version, which can be vegetarian or made with sausage.

Ingredients:

4 T olive oil
1 large sweet white onion
3 carrots
2 celery stalks
6-8 garlic cloves
8-10 cups vegetable broth
3 Italian sweet or mild sausage (optional)
2 cups dried red lentils
1 28-ounce can chopped tomatoes with juice
2 T honey
6 bay leaves
Salt and pepper, per taste
 $\frac{3}{4}$ T-1 T ground cumin
2-3 cups raw spinach



Preparation:

1. Chop onion, carrots, celery, and garlic into small pieces.
2. Heat olive oil in a large soup pan and sauté chopped onion, carrots, and celery until soft.
3. Add minced garlic and sauté a few minutes longer.
4. Stir in rinsed lentils and cumin, cooking until you can smell the cumin.
5. Add vegetable broth and bring to a boil.
6. Season with salt and pepper and add bay leaves.
7. If using sausage, add to the mixture and continue simmering on low for 30-40 minutes, covering with lid.
8. Add tomatoes and continue cooking another 15 minutes, adding more broth, if needed.
9. Remove bay leaves.
10. Add spinach leaves and cook until limp.

Possible toppings: white balsamic, dollops of plain yogurt or sour cream, grated asiago cheese.

Approx. 10 servings. Can be frozen or shared with neighbors.