

Lentil Minestrone

Prep Time: 45 Minutes

Cook Time: 45 Minutes

Serves: 6 - 8 Servings

Ingredients

- 1/8 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 ribs celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- Fine sea salt
- 1 cup chopped seasonal vegetables (yellow squash, zucchini, butternut squash, potatoes, or peas)
- 4 cloves garlic, pressed or minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon basil
- 1 can (28 ounces) diced tomatoes, with their liquid
- 3/4 cup lentils, picked over for debris and rinsed
- 4 cups (32 ounces) vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 2 bay leaves
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup whole-grain elbow, or small shell pasta
- 1 can (15 ounces) Great Northern beans or cannellini beans rinsed and drained, or 1 1/2 cups cooked beans
- 2 cups chopped kale, tough ribs removed
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice or more if needed

Preparation

1. In a Dutch oven or soup pot, warm the olive oil over medium heat until shimmering. Add the onion, carrots, celery, tomato paste, and a pinch of salt. Cook, stirring often, until the vegetables have softened and the onions are turning translucent, 7 to 10 minutes.
2. Add the seasonal vegetables garlic, oregano, basil, and thyme. Cook, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Pour in the tomatoes, lentils, broth, and water. Add 1 teaspoon salt, the bay leaves, and pepper flakes. Season generously with black pepper.
3. Increase the heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to a simmer, then partially cover the pot with the lid, leaving about a 1-inch gap for steam to escape. Reduce the heat as necessary to maintain a gentle simmer and cook for 15 minutes.
4. Uncover and add the pasta, beans, and chopped kale. Continue simmering uncovered until the lentils are tender and the pasta is cooked al dente, about 20 minutes.
5. Remove the pot from the heat, then remove and discard the bay leaves. Stir in the lemon juice. Taste and season with more salt (I usually add another ½ teaspoon), pepper, and/or lemon juice until the flavors really sing.