

What's for Dinner Lentil Soup

Serves 4

This soup is a great example of how having the right ingredients on hand can make a delicious and healthy dinner. While completely optional, a dollop of yogurt or sour cream, some crumbled bacon, and chopped chives make this soup truly outstanding.

2 medium carrots, peeled and finely chopped
1 large or 2 small celery stalks, trimmed and finely chopped
1 large yellow onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 heaping tablespoon minced garlic (about 2 large cloves)
1 heaping tablespoon minced ginger, peeled before chopping
3 tablespoons tomato paste
1 cup French green lentils, picked over and rinsed
1 cup dry vermouth or dry white wine
1 bay leaf
6 cups homemade or store-bought vegetable or chicken broth
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
Optional garnish: a dollop of yogurt or sour cream, crumbled bacon, minced chives

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the finely chopped, carrots, celery, and onion and cook until just beginning to soften, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for 30 seconds or until fragrant. Stir in the tomato paste and lentils.

Add the vermouth and bay leaf and let simmer for 5 minutes to cook off the alcohol. Add the vegetable broth to the pot and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 40 minutes or until the lentils are tender.

Carefully puree the soup in batches in a blender (never fill a blender more than half full with hot liquid) and return the pureed soup to the pot. Season as needed with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste. Serve hot with the optional garnishes, if desired.

This recipe came from *Minced* blog at www.mincedblog.com.