

Turkish Lentil Soup

Helen was one of the youngest ever volunteers at The Well. Now and again her dad will help translate into English for Turkish speaking service users. He spends a lot of time in Istanbul and this is a version of a popular soup that can be found in many eating places there. It's Helen's favourite soup.

Ingredients:

Roughly chop the following vegetables

- 1 large onion
- 1 large carrot
- 1 large potato
- 2 tomatoes
- 2 cloves garlic (optional)
- 2 cups red lentils (rinsed well)
- 1 spoonful of butter or olive oil
- 10 to 12 cups good chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin or cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon hot paprika
- salt to taste

Tempering Spices (optional)

- small spoon of butter or olive oil
- 1 level teaspoon, red pepper powder and a few cumin seeds
- Lemon wedges for serving (optional)

Method:

1. In a large pot heat the butter or olive oil on a medium heat.
2. Add the onions and garlic and sweat until soft, but not brown.
3. Add the cumin seeds/powder and paprika and stir fry for 30 seconds or so.
4. Add the remaining vegetables and stir fry for another 2-3 minutes.
5. Add the chicken stock and lentils and bring to boil over a high heat.
6. Now, lower heat and simmer for 25- 30 minutes. By this point the lentils should be breaking down and the vegetables cooked through.
7. Remove the pot from the heat and blend the soup until it is creamy but not completely smooth.
8. Add more stock /water if soup needs thinning and salt to taste.
10. Temper the spices by heating the butter or oil until hot and adding the dry spices until they are mixed through. Add to the soup.

Serve the soup with good bread and lemon pieces. Lemon can be squeezed into the soup. Fresh mint/ parsley is good added at the last minute too.