

LENTIL SOUP

- 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, coarsely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced* (optional)
- 2 Tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup lentils, sorted and rinsed
- 1 cup brown rice (uncooked)
- 1 can tomato paste (optional - for more tomato flavor)
- 1 large can diced tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon good quality salt
- 1 teaspoon dried basil or several fresh basil leaves
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric* (optional)
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper** (optional)
- 4 cups vegetable stock or water

Optional additions: green beans, carrots, mixed vegetables.

Sauté onions, pepper, and garlic in olive oil. Add lentils and rice and enough water for cooking. (6-8 cups) Cover and simmer until lentils and rice are soft.

Add remaining ingredients and enough vegetable stock or water for desired thickness.

Simmer for one hour, stirring occasionally and serve. Keeps well for a week in the refrigerator and may be frozen.

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Notes:

1) You can use fresh garlic or a pinch of garlic powder or leave it out if you prefer. Garlic will add more flavor to the soup, but you may prefer a blander version. A head or bulb of garlic usually contains about 10 cloves. 1 clove = 1 teaspoon chopped garlic = 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic = 1/8 teaspoon garlic powder = 1/2 teaspoon garlic flakes = 1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic = 1/2 teaspoon garlic juice

2) Feel free to experiment with the seasonings. I added the turmeric when I found out how good it is for you. *Turmeric has a warm, spicy flavor and I think it enhances the flavor of the soup, but you can leave it out and still have a great soup. **Cayenne pepper adds a bite, the size of which depends on how much you add.

3) I sometimes add a 10 oz. Bag of frozen mixed vegetables to this soup, making it more like a vegetable soup with the added protein of the lentils.

4) If you have fresh tomatoes from the garden, you can puree them, skins and all to replace the tomatoes and tomato paste in this recipe.

5) You can replace the rice with one envelope of Kashi 7-grain pilaf.