

Vegetable Lentil Soup

This basic soup of vegetables and lentils can be changed dramatically with herbs, spices and the addition of meat.

Ingredients for Vegetable Lentil Soup:

1 cup carrot, diced
1 cup zucchini, diced
1 cup white onion, diced
1 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
1-2 tbsp minced garlic
1 cup lentils, rinsed
1 – 15 oz can fire roasted diced tomatoes
1 – 8 oz can tomato sauce
4 cups water
2 cups vegetable or chicken broth
1-3 tsp favorite spice or herb blend* (such as cumin, chili powder, Italian herbs)
salt & pepper to taste



*For the version depicted here:

3 teaspoons cumin
1/4 cup chopped cilantro
juice of one lime

Season: By changing the seasonings of this “base” soup you can change the flavor. For this version, my inspiration was Tortilla Soup. I used **3 teaspoons cumin, 1/4 cup chopped cilantro** and the juice of **one lime for the entire batch**. I garnished with a little sour cream for richness.

Serving: This recipe makes about 9 cups soup. Since this is a large amount, you may want to divide the soup before seasoning if you are planning on leftovers. Make two or three varieties. Lentils (and vegetables) will absorb liquid so adjust broth and seasoning before serving and after reheating.

Variations: Try **Italian herbs and ricotta cheese** or **chili powder and raw onions**. Start with a teaspoon of an herb or spice, taste and adjust. Try **ginger, chili and sesame oil**. Add mushrooms, spinach, potatoes or a **fried egg**.

Directions:

1. Add a tablespoon of olive oil to a heavy soup pot and heat to medium.
2. Add diced carrot, zucchini, onion, celery and red bell pepper to the pot and saute until onions are softened and zucchini have just started to turn golden, about 10 minutes.
3. Add garlic. Add cans of tomatoes and sauce and stir. Add the lentils and combine. Add water and broth and bring to a low boil.
4. Reduce heat and cover. Allow to cook and simmer for 30-40 minutes or until lentil are of desired tenderness.
5. Stir in desired seasonings, herbs. Serve piping hot and enjoy.