

Pasta with Lentils

Ingredients:

200g lentils from Umbria (about 7oz)
1 liter cold water (about 1qt)
2 ribs of celery, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 small onion, diced
4 cherry tomatoes, diced
1 clove of garlic
1 sprig of rosemary, chopped
2 sage leaves, chopped
2 Calabrian dried peppers, chopped (optional)
2 bay leaves, whole
160g tiny pasta for soup (about 5.5oz)
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 Tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1 Tablespoon parsley, chopped
Extra virgin olive oil and freshly ground black pepper to serve



Instructions:

Dice the celery, carrot, onion, and tomatoes. Peel the garlic clove and cut in half. Chop the parsley and set aside. (Use 1 small plum tomato if you don't have cherry tomatoes.)

Rinse the lentils to remove any odd particles. In a large pot, add the lentils and cold water. Add the chopped vegetables, garlic, rosemary and sage, chopped Calabrian dried peppers (optional), and bay leaves. Dried herbs are fine if you do not have fresh herbs. If you do not have Calabrian dried peppers you can substitute 1/8 teaspoon of crushed red pepper flake. Place the pot on the stove, cover, and simmer over medium heat for 40 minutes, unless otherwise indicated on the lentil packaging. Stir occasionally to prevent the lentils from sticking to the bottom of the pot. If the soup begins to dry out, add additional water as needed, after heating it in the microwave first as to not stop the cooking process.

Remove the garlic and bay leaves. Add the pasta, turmeric, ginger, salt and black pepper once the lentils are tender and cook for another 5-7 minutes until the pasta is tender. Keep in mind that the pasta and lentils will continue to absorb liquid, so the soup will dry up as it sits.

Just before serving the soup, stir in the chopped parsley. Serve in large soup bowls and drizzle extra virgin olive oil and grinds of freshly ground black pepper to taste. The black pepper really makes this dish come alive, so go heavy on the extra black pepper.

Non-Vegan Options: Substitute chicken or beef stock/broth instead of water. Add grilled Italian sausages, sliced. Top with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese.

Serves 4