



Makes: 8 servings

Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 45 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 pound carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 large onion, peeled and diced
- 1 pound celery, peeled and chopped (leafy, pale center stalks removed)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and lightly smashed
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 generous sprig of thyme
- 1 or 2 fresh parsley stems, with leaves
- 1 pound French lentils, or regular brown lentils
- 2 & 1/2 quarts cold water
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- 1 tbsp plus 1 tsp red wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp butter (optional)
- 12 turns freshly-ground black pepper
- Pecorino-Romano cheese and freshly-chopped parsley, optional, to finish

Instructions

Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add the chopped carrots, celery, and diced onion. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables have slightly softened. Add the tomato paste and garlic and stir constantly (so the tomato paste does not burn) for 2 minutes more. The tomato paste should coat the vegetables.

Add the lentils, water, thyme, parsley, and bay leaves. Stir. Bring to a boil, then lower to a generous simmer. Partially cover the soup with a lid and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 45 minutes.

If, for some reason, the soup looks too thick, add a little more water and stir it to the right consistency.

Add the salt, pepper, red wine vinegar, and butter (if using). Taste for seasoning.

Fish out the bay leaves and thyme and parsley stems. Ladle into bowls and serve with grated pecorino-Romano cheese, minced parsley, and some good crusty bread.

Chef's Note:

I always buy a tube of tomato paste, not a can. The tube lasts longer, is less messy, and is better for small quantities.

Recipe from Unpeeled Journal