



Vibrant Spices Add a Multitude of Healthy Benefits

Spirited Moroccan Red Lentil Soup

Enjoy an adventurous supper with a touch of Africa

Bone Broth

5 cups hot water

1 cup dry bone broth

Red Lentil Soup and Fresh Crunchy Topping

1 Tablespoon coconut or olive oil

1 large onion, peeled, chopped

4 ounces fresh mushrooms, clean, chopped

1 large garlic clove, minced

2 teaspoons Ras el Hanout spice

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

4 Tablespoons tomato paste

1 cup uncooked red lentils, rinsed
1/2 cup chopped colored sweet bell peppers
1/4 cup unsalted chopped mixed nuts
2 Tablespoons dried cranberries, minced
2 teaspoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt; 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
2 to 3 mixed fresh spring baby lettuce leaves

Prepare Bone Broth: In large bowl, combine hot water with dry bone broth; stir to dissolve completely; set aside.

Prepare Onion/Mushroom Mixture: Heat oil in large soup pot over medium heat; add onions; cover; cook about 3 minutes; add mushrooms; toss to combine; cover; cook for about 4 minutes or mixture browns; add garlic; cook for 1 minute to combine. Remove; set aside 1/2 cup onion/mushrooms for topping. Set remainder aside for soup.

In soup pot, add Ras el hanout spice and paprika, cook until spices are fragrant, about 1 minute; stir in 4 Tablespoons tomato paste; cook 1 minute to lightly brown. Stir in 4 cups bone broth. Bring to a boil. Add lentils, reserved onion/mushroom mixture for soup, chopped sweet peppers, chopped nuts, and minced cranberries; bring mixture to a boil; reduce heat to simmer; cover pot, stir occasionally until lentils are soft, about 12 to 15 minutes.

With hand blender, coarsely puree soup; stir in lemon juice, season with salt and black pepper to taste. Stir in additional bone broth until desired consistency; cook until hot. Stir in 1/2 cup chopped cilantro leaves.

Fresh Crunchy Topping:

1/2 cup chopped colored sweet bell peppers
1/2 cup chopped reserved onion mixture
2 Tablespoons (each) coarse chop unsalted mixed nuts; dried cranberries
2 Tablespoons minced cilantro
1/2 Tablespoon fresh lemon juice

In a small bowl, place chopped multi-colored sweet peppers, reserved onion/mushroom mixture, crushed mixed nuts, and chopped cranberries

and minced cilantro; toss with 1/2 Tablespoon lemon juice to coat. Serve as topping with lentil soup.

Place lettuce greens around edge of serving plates; top with bowl of hot soup; place dollop of fresh crunchy topping in center.

Serves: 4 to 6

Cook's Note: Other types of lentils can be substituted but they will take longer to cook until tender. Serve with some seeded crackers or flatbreads.

About the Recipe: Using Ras el hanout, a Moroccan aromatic spice blend, adds a complex flavor to this red lentil soup. It is combined with an array of colorful sweet peppers, crushed crunchy mixed nuts, a touch of sweet berries, and fresh lemon juice. It is difficult to describe the unique flavor, which is spicy, sweet, and sour at the same time. Adding bone broth enhances the nutrition. It's like taking a virtual trip and enjoying supper in a faraway land.