



Italian Flavored Lentil Stew

Loaded with chunks of fresh vegetables and tomatoes

- 3/4 cup lentils, rinsed
 - 1 Tablespoon olive oil
 - 1/2 cup diced (each) carrots; red onions, celery
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - 1 Tablespoon tomato paste
 - 1 cup red wine
 - 1-1/2 cups water or broth
 - 1 teaspoon (each) Dijon mustard; granulated sugar
 - 1 Tablespoon Balsamic vinegar
 - 1 teaspoon (each) rosemary; thyme; oregano
 - 1 teaspoon salt or as desired
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper or as desired
 - 12 cherry tomatoes, halved
 - To Serve: Toasted Baguette slices; Provolone cheese slices as desired
 - Chopped fresh kale, as desired
- Garnish:** Fresh herb or flower sprigs

Check Lentils: Sort lentils; rinse. Parboil lentils in boiling water for 5 minutes; drain; rinse.

Sauté Ingredients: Heat olive oil in large saucepan over medium high heat. Add carrots, onions, and celery. Sauté until lightly browned; add garlic and tomato paste; cook 1 to 2 minutes; stir into vegetables.

Cook Lentils: Pour in liquid ingredients (wine, broth, or water). Add lentils, mustard, sugar, vinegar, and rosemary, thyme, oregano, salt, and black pepper. Bring to a boil; cover; reduce heat to simmer, cook for about 20 minutes or lentils are tender (Some lentils cook quicker while others take longer before they are tender.) Stir in cherry tomato halves; cook until hot.

Toast Bread Slices: Spray bread slices with olive oil; toast under hot broiler until golden; top with piece of cheese; broil only until starting to melt.

To Serve: Place chopped kale on bottom of shallow bowl or plate; spoon portion of lentils into bowl; place bread slice with melted cheese in the center; garnish with herb or flower sprigs.

Serves: 4

About the Recipe: Serve this vegetarian stew, thickened as a side dish, or add more liquid to make it into a soup. It is especially delicious topped with a piece of rustic toasted bread and melting cheese.