

RED LENTIL, CARROT & SWEET POTATO SOUP



This is such a warming and comforting soup. It's earthy and is the food equivalent of a loving embrace. Especially when the weather starts turning a little cold, there's nothing better than a bowl of this appealing orangey goodness. Accompanied by homemade croûtons and a dollop of yoghurt, it's the perfect lunch or dinnertime meal. It's full of iron, fibre, folate, vitamins A, K, C, B6, potassium, calcium, manganese, copper, niacin, proteins and carbohydrates, and is, therefore, very filling – a little goes a long way.

The recipe below is vegetarian, but can very easily become vegan. All you need do, is skip the butter and yoghurt, and replace with a plant-based milk of your choice instead. Whichever way you make it, you will feel satisfied and happy.

Yields:

8 servings

Prep. Time:

0 hours 20 minutes

Cook Time:

0 hours 20 minutes

Total Time:

0 hours 40 minutes



Not suitable for freezing



Suitable from 8-10 months, but skip the spices



Suitable for vegans, if you skip the butter, yoghurt and milk



Suitable for vegetarians

INGREDIENTS

- 500g red lentils
- 7 medium carrots
- 1 medium sweet potato
- 1 medium red onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- 50g butter (*for a vegan alternative, replace the butter with an additional 2 Tbsp olive oil*)
- 4 Tbsp olive oil (*or an extra 2 Tbsp for a vegan alternative*)
- 150ml milk (*use a plant-based milk for a vegan alternative*)
- 1,5L vegetable stock
- 2 tsp cumin seeds (*skip if cooking for babies*)
- 1 tsp chilli flakes (*skip if cooking for babies*)
- ¼ tsp turmeric (*skip if cooking for babies*)
- ¼ tsp paprika (*skip if cooking for babies*)
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- Yoghurt for finishing (optional)

METHOD

1. Chop all the vegetables into small cubes.
2. Heat a frying pan, then dry-fry the cumin, chilli flakes, turmeric and paprika until they release their aromas. Take the frying pan off the heat, and allow to cool. Do take care doing this, as these spices can be rather potent, and if you breathe them in too robustly, you might start coughing and sneezing...trust me...I know!
3. In a heavy-bottomed pot, add your butter and olive oil (unless you want to replace the butter with 2 extra tablespoons of olive oil for a vegan alternative.)
4. When the butter has melted, add half of the dry-fried spices, (reserve the rest for adding on top of the soup), as well as all the cut vegetables, and stir for about 3 minutes.
5. Add the vegetable stock and milk, then stir.
6. Bring to the boil, lower the heat and simmer for about 15 minutes, until the lentils are completely soft.
7. You can use a blender for the next part, but I prefer using a hand-immersed blender as it's so much easier.
8. Whizz all the ingredients until smooth, or to the consistency you desire.
9. Sprinkle a pinch of the reserved dry-fried spices on top.
10. Add a dollop of yoghurt and some homemade croûtons, and enjoy!

HOMEMADE CROÛTONS



These are very quick and easy to make. All you need is some bread (the older, the better), olive oil, salt and oregano. They're tasty and can be made either by frying or by baking in the oven – the choice is yours.

Yields:

8 servings

Prep. Time:

0 hours **3** minutes

Cook Time:

0 hours **8-10** minutes

Total Time:

0 hours **11-13** minutes



Not suitable for freezing



Suitable from **8-10** months



Suitable for vegans



Suitable for vegetarians

INGREDIENTS

- 6-8 Bread slices, cut into cubes
- 2-3 Tbsp Olive oil
- A pinch of salt
- A pinch of dried oregano

METHOD

1. Take your bread and cut it into cubes. The bread you use can be any of your choice – it can even be simple bread slices, it's all good – but it's always better if it's a few days old – makes for crunchier croûtons.
2. If frying, place the olive oil in the frying pan, along with the cubed bread slices, the salt and oregano.
3. Fry until the bread cubes are love and browned.
4. Remove from the pan, and place on a plate with kitchen paper, to remove any excess oil.
5. If baking, preheat oven at 180C/356F.

6. Cover a baking sheet with some greaseproof paper, and place the bread cubes on top.
7. Sprinkle the olive oil, salt and oregano all over, and toss quickly with your hands.
8. Separate the pieces from each other so that they bake more evenly.
9. Place in the oven, and bake for about 3 minutes on one side, then toss the croutons, and bake for another 2-3 minutes, until they're brown and crispy.
10. Remove and allow to cool.
11. Use on top of salads or soups.