

Claudia Phares  
'Sharing is Caring'

Hosted by Claudia Phares and her young family, 'Sharing is Caring' is an online communal dinner. Through virtual interaction, this unique experience aims to reinvent the concept of a communal dinner in this new world we are living in. Run through the platform Jitsi, we welcome all families and community members to join in the process of eating, talking, and sharing a meal.

So that we can all share and eat the same meal, Claudia has shared the recipe for a lentil soup used for the communal dinner. This recipe is simple to prepare and can be adapted to most dietary needs.

RECIPE - LENTIL SOUP

Prep: 10 min      Cook: 45 min

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive oil  
1 onion  
2 garlic cloves  
1 large carrot  
2 celery ribs  
2 cups/400g rinsed dried lentils (green, red or brown)  
400g crushed tomatoes  
6 cups vegetable or chicken stock  
1/2 tsp cumin powder  
1/2 tsp coriander powder  
1 1/2 tsp smoked paprika powder  
2 dried bay leaves  
1 lemon (zest + juice)  
1/4 tsp salt and pepper  
2 cups fresh spinach

INSTRUCTIONS

Heat oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add minced garlic and chopped onion, cook for 2 minutes.

Add chopped celery and carrot. Cook for 7 - 10 minutes or until softened and the onion is sweet. Don't rush this step, it is key to the flavour base of the soup.

Add all remaining ingredients except the lemon and salt. Throw in spinach if desired and stir.

Increase heat and bring to simmer. Scoop scum on the surface off and discard (do this again during cooking if required). Place lid on and turn heat down to medium low. Simmer for 35 - 40 minutes or until lentils are soft. Remove bay leaves at this stage if you're planning on thickening the soup.

Thicken Soup: Using a stick blender, do 2 or 3 quick whizzes to thicken the soup. Or transfer 2 cups to a blender or food processor, let it cool slightly, then hold lid with tea towel and blend then transfer back into pot.

Add a touch of water if you want to adjust soup consistency. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Grate over the zest of the lemon then add a squeeze of lemon juice just before serving.

Garnish with parsley and a dollop of yoghurt if desired and serve with warm bread.

#### RECIPE NOTES

Lentils: Puy Lentils (French lentils) are not recommended for this soup because they hold their shape. Red, yellow, brown, green lentils work well. The colour of the soup may differ depending on the type of lentil.

Cook times may also vary depending on variety of lentils; just start checking if the lentils are done at around 30 minutes.

Dried lentils are best for this recipe. Better texture and flavour compared to canned. However, to make this with canned lentils, use 2 x 400g cans of lentils (drained and rinsed) and reduce the broth by 1 cup. Simmer liquid for 20 minutes before adding the lentils then cook with lentils for another 15 minutes (prolonged cooking may turn the canned lentils into a mush. Which may work for some people.)

Storage: This freezes well. Keeps in the fridge for 3 to 5 days.