

February - Spicy Carrot and Lentil Soup

Sweet and tasty British carrots are plentiful in the shops just now. This recipe is a cheap and easy, tasty soup with protein and fibre from the lentils and with each serving providing over a portion of your 5 daily portions of fruit and vegetables. For children or people unfamiliar with spices, you could half the amounts of spices given below. A hand blender works best and can cost as little as £5 from supermarkets, but you could use a potato masher.

For 4 servings, you will need:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion (about 100g) peeled & chopped
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- ¼ teaspoon chilli powder
- 300g carrots peeled & chopped
- 2 cloves garlic peeled & finely chopped
- 100g red lentils
- 1 vegetable stock cup (low salt if possible)
- Salt (preferably low salt substitute*)
- Ground black pepper
- ¼ lemon
- Pinch or two of sugar
- 4 tablespoon low fat natural live yoghurt

* People receiving medication for diabetes, heart or kidney disorders should consult their doctor before using low salt alternatives

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the onions and spices and sauté for a couple of minutes. Add the garlic and carrots and continue to sauté for a few more minutes until the onions are softened. Add the lentils and continue cooking for another minute.
2. Dissolve the stock cube in 600 ml boiling water and add to the pan.
3. Simmer with a lid on until the carrots are soft.
4. Use a hand blender to make a smooth soup. If you don't have a blender you could use a potato masher. Add a little boiling water if the soup is too thick for you.
5. Add a few grinds of black pepper and the juice from the lemon. Balance the flavour with salt and a pinch or two of sugar if needed.
6. Ladle the soup into four bowls and swirl a tablespoon of yoghurt in each.