

Rasam - Spicy Lentil Soup

This spicy soup, depending on the amount of *sambar* powder seasoning and pepper used, can clear out your sinuses! Often spices are added to water to make this heart-warming SPICY LENTIL SOUP, but adding spices to lentil stock rounds out the flavors even more. The British popularized this dish, albeit a milder version, called mulligatawny soup, the literal translation of the Tamil words, chili water. SPICY LENTIL SOUP is surfacing once again in trendy restaurants, both as a soup and as a broth for shellfish.

Ingredients (To serve 4)

- Lentils (red or yellow) - ½ cup
- Medium tomatoes - 2
- Tamarind concentrate - ½ tsp
- Olive oil - 1 tbsp
- Black mustard seeds - ½ tbsp
- Peppercorns - 8
- Cumin seeds - 1 tsp
- Whole red chilies - 2
- Molasses (jaggery) syrup - 2 tbsp
- Sambar* powder - ½ tbsp
- Curry leaves - 6
- Mint leaves - 6
- Coriander leaves - 4 tbsp
- Salt - ½ tsp

Utensils

- 2 medium pans with lids
- Colander
- Medium bowl
- Small wok

Preparation/Pre-Cooking (30 minutes)

1. Wash and clean the lentils.
2. Boil 4 cups of water in the pan.
3. Add the lentils to the boiling water. Cover and cook on low heat, skimming the froth off periodically, until tender for about 30 minutes.
4. Tip the cooked lentils into the colander and reserve the lentil stock.
5. Plunge the tomatoes in a bowl of freshly boiled water for 5 minutes.
6. Peel the skin of the tomatoes and chop into chunks.
7. Dilute the tamarind concentrate with 1-2 tbsp of warm water.

Cooking (5 minutes)

1. Heat the oil in the wok over high heat.
2. Add the mustard seeds to the hot oil.
3. When the mustard seeds start to pop, add the peppercorns and cumin seeds.
4. When the cumin seeds sizzle, add the whole red chilies and stir-fry for 15 seconds.
5. Remove the wok from heat.
6. In the second pan, add the chopped tomatoes, reserved lentil stock, 3 cups of water, molasses, *sambar* powder, curry, mint and coriander leaves, and tamarind liquid.

Nutrition Information (per serving)

		%DV
Calories	175	9 %
Carbohydrates	29 gm	10 %
Protein	7 gm	14 %
Fat	4 gm	6 %
Cholesterol	0 mg	0 %
Sodium	329 mg	14 %
Fiber	5 gm	20 %
Calcium	148 mg	15 %
Iron	5 mg	28 %

7. Bring the liquid to a boil. Cover the pan. Simmer for 10 minutes.
8. Add the spices from the wok.
9. Season with salt.

Serve: Hot.

Note: *Sambar* powder is a spice blend made with toasted coriander and cumin seeds, peppercorns, red chilies, turmeric, fenugreek, and asafetida. Cutting back on the peppercorns greatly reduces the “heat” of this soup.

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