

If your winter meals could use some livening up, this flavorful soup will do the trick: it is a one-pot meal with flavors that are completely transporting. You might imagine lying on embroidered cushions in a Moroccan pavilion, a warm breeze perfumed with spices gently billowing the sheer draperies around you. Bright flowers bloom nearby. You feel warm and relaxed. Now that's a soup with sensual appeal!

Aside from its lusciousness quotient, the best feature of this recipe is that it turns ordinary kitchen-cupboard ingredients into something pleasingly exotic. Red lentils, for example, cook quickly and add lovely color and flavor to this Moroccan-inspired dish. Warm spices (including one that is thought to be a cancer-fighter), healthful olive oil, and vegetables all add their benefits. Time to take the Marrakesh Express with this great Red Lentil Soup.

INGREDIENTS

4 ribs celery, chopped
1/2 onion, chopped
2 tablespoons light olive oil
1/2 teaspoon ginger
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
6 cups good-quality vegetable broth
4 plum tomatoes, diced
1 cup red lentils
1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
1 bunch cilantro, chopped
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Salt to taste

1. In a large soup pot, saute the onion and celery in the oil until tender.
2. Add ginger, cinnamon, turmeric, vegetable broth, tomatoes, lentils, and garbanzo beans.
3. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 45 minutes or until lentils are tender, stirring occasionally.
4. Right before serving, add cilantro and lemon juice.
5. Add salt to taste.

Serves 6.