Lemon, Carrot and Red Lentil Soup

2 substantial soup bowls, each with half the finished lentil-carrot soup | Active 18 min | Cook 35 min | Total 50 min

Ingredients

- 100 g (3 1/2 oz; about 1/2 cup) dry split red lentils, sorted and rinsed
- 180 g (6 1/3 oz) prepared carrot, peeled and cut into 5 mm/3⁄16 in dice
- 60 g (2 oz) peeled onion, finely chopped
- 10 ml (2 tsp) olive oil
- 600 ml (about 2 1/2 US cups) ready-to-use lower-sodium vegetable stock
- Up to 120 ml (1/2 cup) water, only if needed during cooking or to loosen the finished soup
- 0.5 g caraway seeds (about 1/4 tsp)
- 0.5 g dried dill (about 1/2 tsp)
- 1 g fine salt (about 1/6 tsp), or less if the stock is salty
- 0.3 g ground black pepper (about 1/8 tsp)
- 20 ml lemon juice (1 tbsp plus 1 tsp), seeds removed
- 1 g finely grated unwaxed lemon zest (about 1/2 tsp)

Set out

1000 W microwave with turntable, Kitchen scale and measuring jug, Knife and cutting board, Spoon, Oven mitts, Two serving bowls, Microwave-safe bowl, at least 3 L/3 1/4 US qt measured capacity, about 22 cm/8 3/4 in inside diameter and 11 cm/4 1/4 in deep, Microwave-safe vented cover, Fine sieve, Fine grater and citrus juicer, Food thermometer for leftover reheating checks

Allergens

No major US allergen identified in base ingredients. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put the carrot, onion, oil and caraway in the 3 L bowl. Cover with a vent. Microwave at 1000 W full power for 2 minutes, stir, then heat for 2 minutes more. The onion should soften and the carrot should begin to yield. Lift the cover away from your face.

2. Add the rinsed lentils, stock, dill, salt and pepper. Stir well and replace the vented cover. Heat at full power for 5-7 minutes, stopping after 4 minutes to stir, until the liquid is bubbling. Pause earlier if foam rises toward the cover.

3. Reduce to 50% power. Cook for 18-24 minutes, stopping every 4 minutes to stir the bottom, edges and center. Keep the cover vented. If the mixture thickens before the lentils are soft, stir in 30 ml/2 tbsp of the reserve water at a time. Continue until the lentils are fully soft and break down when pressed; a warm but firm lentil is not finished. Additional 1-minute bursts at 50% power may be needed.

4. Stand covered with the vent open for 3 minutes. Stir in the lemon juice and zest. If necessary, use the remaining measured water, a little at a time, for a spoonable soup. Any cold water addition should be followed by a stirred 30-60-second full-power burst to make the soup hot again. Divide the complete batch equally between two bowls.

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Keep the lid loose

A vent must remain open during heating and standing. A sealed storage lid is not a cooking cover.

A useful next-day texture

Stir in the reheating water before judging a chilled portion. The lentils continue to absorb liquid; this is not a reason to leave them undercooked today.

Ingredient labels

Stock may contain celery, wheat, soy or milk; choose and check the actual label. Lentils are legumes. No claim of freedom from cross-contact is made.

A useful detail

The 50-minute plan allows 10 minutes of preparation, up to 35 minutes of sequential heating, a 3-minute stand and 2 minutes to finish and portion. The optional last warming burst can extend that plan. These are starting ranges for a 1000 W oven; lentil tenderness and gentle bubbling control the cook. A microwave does not make this dry-lentil soup instant.

Another way

Replace the dill with 2 g/1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley, stirred in with the lemon. Keep the caraway and all other quantities unchanged.

Use 180 g/6 1/3 oz peeled parsnip in 5 mm/3⁄16 in dice instead of carrot. Its firmer pieces may need an extra 2-4 minutes in the first stage; continue until both root and lentils are tender.

Keep it well

Portion leftovers into shallow containers and refrigerate within 2 hours, or within 1 hour above 90°F/32°C, at 40°F/4°C or colder. Use within 3 days or an earlier stock-package deadline. The soup thickens in the refrigerator; add about 15-30 ml/1-2 tbsp water per portion and reheat under a vented cover in short bursts, stirring, then stand for 2 minutes and check for 165°F/74°C throughout before eating.