Herby Lentil and Roasted Pepper Pita Pockets

2 filled pitas, cut into 4 halves · Active 20 min · Total 1 hr 20 min

Skills: Confident beginner

Ingredients

• 1 can (15 oz/425 g) green or brown lentils, rinsed and thoroughly drained to yield about 1 1/3 cups (240 g)

• 3/4 cup jarred roasted red pepper, drained, patted dry and diced (120 g)

• 1/2 medium cucumber, seeded if watery and finely diced (100 g prepared weight)

• 1/4 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley (15 g)

• 1/3 cup crumbled feta (50 g)

• 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon lemon juice (20 ml)

• 2 teaspoons olive oil (10 ml)

• 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin (1 g)

• 1/4 teaspoon black pepper (0.5 g)

• 2 large whole-wheat pitas, about 9 inches (23 cm) across (200 g total)

• 4 lettuce leaves, washed and dried (40 g)

Set out

Sieve, Mixing bowl, Fork, Two lunch containers

Allergens

Wheat, Milk. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Put about one-quarter of the drained lentils in the mixing bowl. Add the lemon juice and olive oil; mash roughly with the fork.

2. Fold in the remaining lentils, roasted pepper, cucumber, parsley, feta, cumin and black pepper. Taste before adding any extra seasoning; the feta supplies salt.

3. For a packed meal, spread the filling in a shallow container, cover and refrigerate until at or below 40°F/4°C, allowing about 1 hour. Keep the dry lettuce refrigerated separately. For immediate serving, proceed directly to assembly.

4. Cut each pita in half and carefully open the pockets. Line the four halves with the lettuce leaves and divide the filling between them. Pack in a rigid container and keep chilled, or carry the filling separately and assemble at the break.

Keep a backup pita separate

Filling both meals at once is convenient, but dry bread stored separately gives you more flexibility if your next break moves. Refrigerate the filling and leave the unfilled bread sealed according to its package.

Timing

About 20 minutes to assemble for immediate eating, or an estimated 80 minutes including chilling for packing. Allow longer until the filling actually reaches 40°F/4°C or below.

A useful detail

Use two genuinely large pitas, about 9 inches (23 cm) across and 100 g each. Each half takes about one-quarter of the filling; if your bread is smaller, carry some filling separately rather than forcing it in. If a lentil can yields less than 240 g drained, make up the measured amount from a second can.

Keep it well

Refrigerate the filling promptly at 40°F/4°C or below for up to 3 days; keep bread and lettuce separate for the best texture. Use assembled pitas within 1 day. Transport already chilled in an insulated bag with two cold sources and refrigerate at work. Do not leave the filled pitas at room temperature for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C.