Chicken Lentil Soup for the Freezer

4 generous soup meals, each with one-quarter of the soup and 1 bread slice · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 25 min

Skills: Beginner with ordinary kitchen equipment

Ingredients

- 14 oz raw boneless skinless chicken thigh, cut into 3/4-inch/2 cm pieces (400 g)
- 3/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon dry split red lentils, rinsed (160 g)
- 2 large carrots, diced (200 g prepared)
- 1 large onion, diced (150 g)
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced (100 g)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced (6 g)
- 1 can crushed tomatoes with juice (400 g/about 14 oz)
- About 6 cups water (1.4 liters)
- 1 tablespoon olive oil (15 ml/about 13.5 g)
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin (2 g)
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika (2 g)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (30 ml/about 30 g)
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley (15 g)
- 1 teaspoon fine salt (6 g)
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper (1 g)
- 4 slices whole-wheat bread (160 g total)

Set out

5-liter/about 5-quart saucepan with lid, Spoon and ladle, Knife and separate raw-chicken board or cleaned board, Fine sieve for lentils, Kitchen scale, Measuring jug, Food thermometer, 4 shallow storage containers, 4 soup bowls

Allergens

Wheat; check bread labels for milk, sesame or other added allergens. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Prepare vegetables first, then cut raw chicken and wash its equipment and your hands. Rinse red lentils and set out 4 shallow containers for any planned later portions.

2. Heat oil in the large saucepan over medium heat. Cook onion, carrot and celery for 9–11 minutes until softening. Add garlic, cumin and paprika for 30 seconds, stirring.

3. Add tomatoes, measured water, rinsed lentils, salt and pepper. Bring to a gentle boil, then stir in chicken. Reduce to a steady gentle simmer, partly cover and cook for 25–30 minutes, stirring near the base, until lentils are soft and thick chicken pieces reach 165°F/74°C. Follow a longer lentil packet time if required.

4. Fold in lemon juice and parsley. Stir well and divide the entire soup into 4 equal shares of solids and broth. Serve each meal with 1 bread slice. The 85-minute total is to serve; any cooling and freezing happen afterward using the storage directions.

Chicken Lentil Soup for the Freezer

4 generous soup meals, each with one-quarter of the soup and 1 bread slice · Active 40 min · Total 1 hr 25 min

Skills: Beginner with ordinary kitchen equipment

A useful kitchen skill

Portion a soup’s solids and broth evenly into shallow containers before cooling, instead of leaving a deep full pot to stand.

A useful detail

Raw skinless thigh and dry red lentils are the nutrition starting states. The pot makes four meal portions; final volume varies with evaporation, so divide the full batch rather than using an assumed cup size. All four bread slices are included.

Keep it well

Divide leftovers promptly into shallow containers, no more than about 2 inches/5 cm food depth, and refrigerate at 40°F/4°C or below within 2 hours, or 1 hour above 90°F/32°C. Do not wait for a deep pot or dish to cool on the counter. Use refrigerated portions within 3 days. Once chilled, seal, date and freeze planned portions at 0°F/−18°C for up to 2 months for quality. Thaw in the refrigerator and reheat the needed portion to 165°F/74°C throughout, stirring and adding water if thick. Keep bread separate.