Lentil, Macaroni and Rice Bowls with Crisp Onions

4 bowls, each with one-quarter of the grains, lentils, sauce and onions · Active 35 min · Total 1 hr

Skills: Coordinating separate grains and making an onion topping

Ingredients

• 3/4 cup dry brown or green lentils, rinsed (150 g)

• 3 cups water for lentils (720 ml)

• 3/4 cup long-grain white rice, rinsed and drained (150 g dry)

• 1 1/4 cups water for rice (300 ml)

• About 3/4 cup small dried macaroni (100 g)

• 6 cups water for pasta (1.5 L)

• 3 medium onions (450 g prepared): 2 onions/300 g thinly sliced and 1 onion/150 g finely chopped

• 5 tablespoons neutral oil (75 ml), divided: 4 tablespoons/60 ml for sliced onions and 1 tablespoon/15 ml for sauce

• 3 garlic cloves, minced (9 g prepared)

• 1 teaspoon ground cumin (2 g)

• 1/2 teaspoon paprika (1 g)

• 1 can crushed tomatoes (14 oz/400 g)

• 1 tablespoon tomato paste (16 g)

• 2 tablespoons plain white vinegar (30 ml)

• 1 teaspoon fine salt (6 g), divided: 1/4 teaspoon/1.5 g for lentils, 1/4 teaspoon/1.5 g for rice and 1/2 teaspoon/3 g for sauce

Set out

2 medium saucepans with lids, 12-inch/30 cm skillet, colander, knife and board, clean towel or paper towel, measuring jug, slotted spoon, food thermometer

Allergens

wheat. Check labels and substitutions.

Make it

1. Prepare both onion cuts and spread the thin slices briefly on a clean towel. Put lentils, their 720 ml water and 1/4 teaspoon/1.5 g salt in one saucepan. Bring to a boil, then simmer for about 20–25 minutes until tender, checking a lentil rather than assuming the time. Drain and keep covered.

2. Meanwhile, put rice, its 300 ml water and 1/4 teaspoon/1.5 g salt in the second saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover, reduce to very low heat and cook for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat and rest covered for 10 minutes; check that the grains are tender.

3. Heat 60 ml oil in the skillet over medium heat. Add the sliced onions and cook uncovered for 20–25 minutes, turning regularly, until golden and crisping at the edges. Lift onto a plate lined with paper towel, leaving excess oil in the pan. Do not wait for a dark brown color.

4. Use the drained lentil saucepan to boil the measured pasta water. Add macaroni and cook according to its package, usually 7–9 minutes, until tender. Drain. Keep the rice, lentils and pasta separate until serving.

5. Carefully pour any excess onion-frying oil into a heatproof container to cool; do not pour it down the sink. Add the measured final 15 ml oil to the skillet, then cook the chopped onion for 5 minutes. Add garlic, cumin and paprika for 30 seconds, then tomatoes, tomato paste, vinegar and the remaining 3 g salt. Simmer for 10 minutes until thickened.

6. Divide rice, lentils and macaroni between 4 bowls. Add one-quarter of the tomato sauce and crisp onion strands to each bowl. Serve promptly rather than holding cooked rice at room temperature.

Lentil, Macaroni and Rice Bowls with Crisp Onions

4 bowls, each with one-quarter of the grains, lentils, sauce and onions · Active 35 min · Total 1 hr

Skills: Coordinating separate grains and making an onion topping

A measured mixed-grain meal

The four servings include all three dry staples. This is not a sauce recipe that depends on an unmeasured side to make it filling.

Ingredient labels

Check pasta and tomato paste labels for additional allergens; some pasta contains egg.

A useful detail

The three pans overlap in use. Start the lentils and rice before the onion topping; once lentils are drained their pot becomes the pasta pot, and the onion skillet becomes the sauce pan.

Keep it well

Cool rice and the other cooked components promptly in shallow containers, ideally refrigerating rice within 1 hour. Keep at 40°F/4°C or below and use the rice-containing meal within 24 hours. Reheat once to 165°F/74°C throughout and eat promptly; do not save reheated rice for another cycle. Keep the crisp onions separately refrigerated and add after reheating.