

K's Kitchen: Moroccan Lentil Soup

By Kathryn Reed

My sister, Pam, rolled her eyes and shook her head when I said I was going to try another new soup out on her. The last time I did this I nearly had to order out for pizza.

Things went better this time, but still not perfect. The recipe I'm printing is exactly as I made it, but not how I would make it again. As I wrote in the cookbook – add more spices. I would also let it simmer longer before serving. That probably can be said for most soups.



The flavors and heartiness of the soup called out to me. It seemed like the perfect concoction for the holidays – or any cold, winter night.

“Fields of Greens” by Annie Somerville is one cookbook I use over and over again. Usually, though, I’m turning to the pages I’m familiar with.

Somerville is the chef at Greens Restaurant in San Francisco. It’s my favorite. To be able to order off the entire menu is such a rare opportunity as a vegetarian, and something that never happens in Lake Tahoe.

But I digress.

Below is everything Somerville has to say about her recipe.

Moroccan Lentil Soup

The rich, complex flavor of this soup are satisfying on all

levels – they become very full and round as the ginger, the pungent spices, and the vegetables slowly simmer with the lentils. The cilantro adds a fresh, light touch.

1 C lentils, about 6 ounces

6 C cold water

1 T extra virgin olive oil

1 medium-size yellow onion, diced, about 2 cups

Salt

Cayenne pepper

1 small carrot, diced, about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

1 celery rib, diced, about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

1 small red or yellow bell pepper, diced, about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup

1 tsp cumin seed, toasted and ground

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground coriander

$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp turmeric

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 T grated fresh ginger

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. fresh tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped, about 1 cup, or 1 8-ounce can tomatoes with juice, chopped

2T chopped cilantro

Sort and rinse the lentils and place them in a soup pot with the cold water. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer, uncovered, until tender about 20 minutes.

While the lentils are cooking, heat the olive oil in a medium-size sauté pan and add the onions, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, a few pinches

of cayenne. Cook over medium heat until the onions are soft, 7 to 8 minutes, then add the vegetables, another $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt, and the spices. Cook for 5 minutes, then stir in the garlic and ginger and cook for another minute or two. Add the vegetable and tomatoes to the lentils and their broth. Cover and cook for 30 minutes, allowing the flavors to blend and deepen. Season to taste with salt and cayenne. Garnish each serving with a sprinkle of cilantro.

Makes 8-9 cups.