

COOKING WITH LENTILS



Lentils are in the legume family, like beans. That said, lentils don't need to be soaked the way beans do, but they should be rinsed. It's important to always pick over and rinse your lentils, whether you're using red or green. You may notice tiny stones or other debris with the lentils, and you'll want to discard that. Some people also prefer to soak their lentils to aid in digestion and reduce anti-nutrients. Once you've rinsed the lentils in a bowl of water a few times, strain through a sieve.

LENTIL "SLOPPY JOES"

Ingredients

- 1 lb. green or brown lentils
- 1 tablespoon olive or avocado oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 (15 oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 2 tablespoons yellow mustard
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 quart vegetable broth

Instructions

- Pick over the lentils and discard any stones or debris. Rinse and drain the lentils.
- Heat the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté the onion and bell pepper until softened. Add to the slow cooker or Instant Pot.
- Add the rinsed lentils, tomato sauce, ketchup, mustard, syrup, chili powder, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, and vegetable broth to the slow cooker or Instant Pot.
- Cover and cook on high for 4 hours or low for 8 hours in the slow cooker.
- Or cook on high pressure in the Instant Pot for 15 minutes, with valve sealing, then let the pressure naturally release for 10-15 minutes.
- Lightly toast bread. Serve the lentil sloppy joe filling on the bread, with slices of onion, avocado, and greens as desired.

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LENTIL NACHOS WITH 3-CHEESE SAUCE

Ingredients

For the Nachos

- 1 cup uncooked lentils
- 1/2 cup uncooked freekeh or other grain like farro, bulgur, or brown rice
- 4 cups enchilada sauce
- 3-4 cups broth or water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- chips
- cilantro, avocado, jalapeno, and lime for topping

For the Cheese Sauce

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 1/2 cups shredded cheese (half cup of three varieties if you want to make it technically “three cheese” – I liked Monterrey Jack, Mozzarella, and Pepperjack)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Instructions

- Rinse the lentils and the grains. Bring the enchilada sauce and 2 cups broth to a low simmer. Add the lentils and grains and cook, stirring occasionally, for 30-40 minutes or until everything is soft and most of the moisture has been absorbed. If things are getting too dry, add some of the extra broth to the pot while it's simmering. The sauce should eventually take on a thick gravy-like consistency (see pictures).
- Meanwhile, melt the butter in a small saucepan. Stir in the flour.
- Add the milk slowly, whisking to smooth out any lumps of flour. Simmer until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir in the cheese.
- Top the chips with a scoop of the lentil mixture, the cheese sauce, avocado, and cilantro.

LENTIL FALAFEL

Ingredients

- 1 small red onion
- 2 cloves garlic
- A handful of parsley
- 1 cup soaked red lentils*
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons chickpea flour**
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper, to taste
- Juice of a lemon

Instructions

- Pick over the lentils and discard and stones or debris. Rinse and drain the lentils.
- Preheat the oven to 200C / 400F and line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the onion, garlic, and parsley into the bowl of a food processor and blend until finely chopped. Add the lentils, oil, flour, spices, and lemon juice, then pulse until combined and you can form loose balls with the mixture.
- Form golf ball sized patties and place them onto the prepared baking sheet. They will spread slightly so leave some space between each. Bake for 18-20 minutes or until golden and serve hot. Leftovers freeze well and can be refrigerated up to three days.

CHEESY POTATO LENTIL PIE

Ingredients

- 300 g ready-rolled shortcrust pastry (enough to line a 9-inch round tin or dish)
- 2/3 C dried red lentils
- Vegetable stock or water, for boiling
- 2 medium carrots, grated
- 1/3C frozen peas
- 1/2C frozen sweetcorn kernels
- 1/2 tsp dried thyme or oregano
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- Black pepper
- 1 egg
- 1 1/3 C cheddar cheese, grated
- 3 Cornish new potatoes, thinly sliced

Instructions

- Lightly grease a 9-inch springform cake tin or pie dish. Lay the sheet of pastry over the top of the tin, and gently ease it down into the corners. Don't worry if you end up with a few small tears - just patch them up with more pastry. Allow the pastry to rise up the side of the tin by about 2-3 inches, and cut away any excess. Prick the base of the pastry a few times with a fork, and blind bake at 375°F for around 20 minutes, until just turning golden.
- While the pastry is baking, add the red lentils to a saucepan with plenty of water or vegetable stock. Boil for around 15 minutes, until tender, then drain.
- Add the cooked lentils to a large mixing bowl, along with the grated carrot, frozen peas and frozen sweetcorn (you can defrost your frozen vegetables first if you prefer - I added mine frozen). Also add the dried thyme or oregano, dijon mustard, and plenty of black pepper, and mix well to combine.
- Add the egg and most of the grated cheddar to the bowl (just hold back a little cheese for topping), and mix again thoroughly.
- When the pastry is starting to turn golden, remove it from the oven. If it has puffed up at all, just press it back down with the back of a spoon. Add the cheesy lentil mixture to the pie base, and top with the thinly sliced Cornish new potatoes. Finish with the last of the grated cheese and a bit more black pepper, and return to the oven for a further 30-40 minutes, until firm and golden brown.

LENTIL DEVEILED EGGS

Ingredients

- 12 eggs
- 1/5 cup cooked red lentils
- 6 yolks – from the hardboiled eggs
- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp mustard – yellow or dijon
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt to taste
- 1/8 tsp garlic powder – optional
- Chopped chives and anchovies for garnishing

Instructions

- Place the eggs in a medium-large pot and bring to a boil.
- Cover the pot, turn the heat to medium and hard-boil the eggs for 12-15 minutes, depending on their size.
- Turn off the heat, allowing the eggs to sit in hot water for about 3 minutes.
- Remove the eggs from the water and set aside to cool.
- When the eggs are cool, peel and cut in half lengthwise.
- Gently scoop out the center yolk and set aside.
- In a food processor, puree ½ cup cooked red lentil with 1tbsp olive oil.
- When the mixture is completely smooth and creamy add mustard, juice of half a lemon, salt and garlic powder (optional) and puree it for 30 seconds or so.
- Place filling into a piping bag, or a ziplock bag with the tip cut off.
- Pipe filling into the center of each egg white, distributing filling evenly among the egg whites.
- Top with chopped chives and anchovies.
- Enjoy right away, or keep refrigerated for about 5 days.