

MERCIMIEK CORBASI

INGREDIENTS

5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 medium yellow onion, chopped
3 garlic cloves, minced, divided
2 to 3 carrots, peeled and chopped
1 medium russet potato, peeled and small diced or chopped
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons tomato paste
6 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
2 teaspoons Aleppo pepper, divided
1 teaspoon cumin
½ teaspoon coriander
1 cup red lentils, picked over and rinsed
1 large lemon, cut into wedges

METHOD

In a large Dutch oven or cooking pot, heat 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil over medium-high heat until shimmering.

Add the onions, 2 minced garlic cloves, carrots, and potatoes. Season with a good dash of kosher salt, and cook, stirring occasionally until the vegetables have softened (about 5 to 7 minutes).

Add the tomato paste and toss to coat the vegetables with the paste, then add the broth 1 teaspoon of Aleppo-style pepper and the rest of the spices.

Add the lentils and stir.

Allow the soup to come to a rolling boil for 4 to 5 minutes, then lower the heat and cover the Dutch oven with the lid leaving a small opening.

Let the soup simmer on the lowest heat setting for about 15 to 20 minutes or until the lentils and the vegetables are completely tender. (Check occasionally and give the soup a stir as needed. If it is getting too thick, add a little bit more vegetable broth about ½ to 1 cup more).

Remove the pot from the heat and carefully blend the soup using an immersion blender until smooth and creamy. (Alternatively, transfer the soup to a standard blender, let some of the steam escape. Blend in batches until all of the soup is smooth.)

To finish, in a small skillet, warm about 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil over medium heat. Add the remaining Aleppo pepper and minced garlic and cook briefly until the garlic is golden brown and the oil has taken on a red hue from the Aleppo pepper. Remove from the heat and pour the warmed oil all over the soup.

Serve with lemon wedges to the side.

THE COOKERY

by The Secret Jozi Chef

The Colony Shopping Centre, 345 Jan Smuts Avenue, Craighall, 2024.

www.facebook.com/secretjozichef