Crock Pot Lentil Soup

Hearty, nutrient-dense and perfect for slow-cooker days.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium onions, minced
- 4 medium garlic cloves
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for serving if desired
- 1 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1/2 oz dried porcini mushrooms, soaked, rinsed and minced
- 1 1/2 tsp minced fresh thyme leaves, or 1 tsp dried thyme
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 4 slices bacon
- 3 carrots, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
- 12 oz portobello mushroom caps, gills removed and cut into 1/2-inch chunks (or sliced baby bellas)
- 1 cup brown or green lentils, rinsed and picked over
- 1 bay leaf
- 8 oz Swiss chard leaves (or collard greens), chopped

DIRECTIONS

1. For deeper flavor, cook the onion, garlic, thyme, bacon, tomato paste and porcini mushrooms on the stove for about 5 minutes. You can also microwave this mixture for 5 minutes.
2. Stir both broths, the bacon mixture, carrots, fresh mushrooms, lentils and bay leaf into the slow cooker.
3. Cover and cook on LOW for 9-11 hours, until thickened and the lentils are tender. Or cook on HIGH for 5-7 hours.
4. About 30 minutes before the soup is done, remove the bacon and bay leaf. Stir in the chopped Swiss chard or greens.
5. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle with a little extra olive oil before serving, if desired.
6. Serve as-is or with toasted French bread or whole-wheat bread.

Original ingredient list credited to America's Test Kitchen.