

MEMBER RECIPE: LENTIL STEW

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This is kind of a staple in my household, partly because it's easy to vary, cheap and pretty easy to cook. It can also be totally vegan or served with additions that make it less so—the hot dog version works with the kids, but I've often cooked it for myself as a vegan dish. The recipe below is for four, but you can easily reduce or increase the ingredients if cooking for more or fewer people.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 carrot, diced
- 1 celery rib, diced
- a cup of diced onion
- a garlic clove, chopped
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 cup lentils
- 2 cups vegetable broth or water (the broth does add some flavor)
- salt to taste
- pinch of red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp oregano
- a ripe tomato (large if cooking for 4, a Roma is enough for 2), diced

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut up the vegetables, then fry them (except for the tomato) in a medium saucepan with the oil, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent and the other vegetables have softened a bit (about 5 minutes).
2. Add all the other ingredients except the tomato, bring it to a boil, reduce to a simmer, cover, and cook for 35 minutes.
3. Test to see if you need to add more salt—don't give it too much at start, but make sure it's tasty.
4. Stir in the tomato.

Variations

Tex-Mex Version: Add 1 tsp of cumin and ½ tsp of chili powder to the oregano. Op-

tionally, delete the pepper flakes, and add a jalapeno to the vegetables when frying (cut up, seeds removed).

Indian Version: Replace the oregano and red pepper flakes with 1 tsp of garam masala or curry and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp of cayenne pepper.

Provençal Version: Replace the oregano with tarragon, and add in a quarter cup of black olives and a tsp of capers.

In general: Almost any spice mixture can be used. I vary them so it's not always the same-old, same-old. Also, replacing the tomato with corn or peas is good.

Non-Vegan Options

1. Use butter instead of oil.
2. Use chicken stock instead of vegetable stock.
3. Roast (at 400 degrees for 20 minutes, turning half way through) or fry four hot dogs or other sausages until nicely crispy, then slice them into rounds, and stir in at the end with the tomatoes. My kids always sigh when I say, "Tonight we're eating vegetarian," but eat up this version with gusto.

What Kind of Lentils Should I Use?

Normally, standard green lentils. You could also use split peas. Lentils de puy (which the Coop labels as French Indigo lentils) are also good, but could use another 5 minutes cooking time. I do not recommend red lentils for this recipe because they turn to mush—if you do use them, reduce cooking time to 20 minutes.

Sides

This is a meal in its own right, but a side salad or a bit of bread and cheese is nice. If going for vegan, here's a bonus recipe for a bread dipping sauce:

Vegan Dip for Bread

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 chopped garlic clove
- ¼ tsp rosemary
- Salt and pepper to taste

Mix it all up and serve on the side.

Greg Costikyan has been a Coop member since 2009 and is a member of the Men-shemsaqa Angaza. He has designed more than 30 commercially published games, and has written four sff novels.