

Rustic Italian Lentil Soup

Yield: 10 servings

Ingredients:

- Canola oil as needed
- 1 # Sweet Italian sausage links, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 Large onion, small dice
- 1 Medium carrot, small dice
- 1 Celery ribs, small dice
- 4 Garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 T Dry oregano
- 1 T Dry Basil
- ½ t Red pepper flakes (as desired)
- 2 T Tomato paste
- 2 C Canned diced tomatoes
- 1 2/3 C Lentils (11 ounces), rinsed well
- 2 ½ Qt. Chicken stock or broth
- 1 Bay leaf
- 1/2 # Escarole, chopped (4 C packed) or Baby spinach or Kale
- 1-2 T Red-wine vinegar

Method:

1. Heat oil in a wide heavy 5- to 6-quart pot over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Brown sausage, about 7 minutes. Transfer sausage with a slotted spoon to a bowl.
2. Reduce heat to medium and cook onion, carrots, and celery. After mirepoix has sweated add the garlic, herbs, and red pepper flakes. Cooking for 1 minute to release flavors.
3. Stir in tomato paste and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add sausage and lentils mixing gently until combined.
4. Add the chicken stock and cook until lentils are tender.
5. Stir in desired greens and cook until tender, about 3 minutes. Stir in vinegar to taste and season with salt and pepper. Discard bay leaf and serve.