

Red Lentil and Colorful Vegetable Soup

Adapted from Deborah Madison

Here is a fun recipe for family members to join in with cutting and chopping. The addition of minced cilantro stems adds lovely flavor.

2 to 4 tablespoons butter or sunflower seed oil or olive oil
1 large onion, finely diced
1 long celery rib, diced
4 skinny long carrots, finely diced or cut into rounds (1 cup)
3 tablespoons minced cilantro stems
1 cup finely diced peeled winter squash or sweet potato
salt and freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
1 cup diced fresh or canned tomatoes with their juice
1 cup red lentils, rinsed well
juice of 1 lime, or to taste
4 scallions, including an inch of the greens, sliced

1. Melt half the butter or oil in a wide soup pot. Add the onion and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally while you dice the celery, carrots, cilantro stems and squash or sweet potato. Add them to the onions, sprinkle on 1-1/2 teaspoons salt, the turmeric and the cumin and cook for 5 minutes.
2. Add the tomatoes, lentils and 5-1/2 cups water. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer, partially covered, until the lentils have softened, 20 to 30 minutes. Taste for salt and add a few grindings of pepper. Season with lime juice.
3. In a small skillet, melt the remaining butter or oil, add the scallions and toss over high heat to wilt them, about 2 minutes. Serve the soup with some scallions in each bowl.