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Rasam - Spicy Lentil Soup

This spicy soup, depending on the amount of *sambar* powder seasoning and pepper used, can clear out your sinuses! Often spices are added to water to make this heart-warming Spicy Lentil Soup, but adding spices to lentil stock rounds out the flavors even more. The British popularized this dish, albeit a milder version, called mulligatawny soup, the literal translation of the Tamil words, chili water. Spicy Lentil Soup is surfacing once again in trendy restaurants, both as a soup and as a broth for shellfish.

Ingredients (To serve 4)

Lentils (red or yellow) - 1/2 cup

Medium tomatoes - 2

Tamarind concentrate - 1/2 tsp

Olive oil - 1 tbsp

Black mustard seeds - ½ tbsp

Peppercorns - 8

Cumin seeds - 1 tsp

Whole red chilies - 2

Molasses (jaggery) syrup - 2 tbsp

Sambar powder - ½ tbsp

Curry leaves - 6

Mint leaves - 6

Coriander leaves - 4 tbsp

Salt - ½ tsp

Utensils

2 medium pans with lids

Colander

Medium bowl

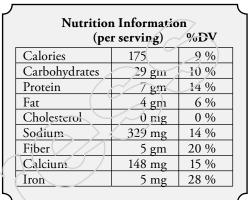
Small wok

Preparation/Pre-Cooking (30 minutes)

- 1. Wash and clean the lentils.
- 2. Boil 4 cups of water in the pan.
- 3. Add the lentils to the boiling water. Cover and cook on low heat, skimming the froth off periodically, until tender for about 30 minutes.
- 4. Tip the cooked lentils into the colander and reserve the lentil stock.
- 5. Plunge the tomatoes in a bowl of freshly boiled water for 5 minutes.
- 6. Peel the skin of the tomatoes and chop into chunks.
- 7. Dilute the tamarind concentrate with 1-2 tbsp of warm water.

Cooking (5 minutes)

- 1. Heat the oil in the wok over high heat.
- 2. Add the mustard seeds to the hot oil.
- 3. When the mustard seeds start to pop, add the peppercorns and cumin seeds.
- 4. When the cumin seeds sizzle, add the whole red chilies and stir-fry for 15 seconds.
- 5. Remove the wok from heat.
- 6. In the second pan, add the chopped tomatoes, reserved lentil stock, 3 cups of water, molasses, *sambar* powder, curry, mint and coriander leaves, and tamarind liquid.





- 7. Bring the liquid to a boil. Cover the pan. Simmer for 10 minutes.
- 8. Add the spices from the wok.
- 9. Season with salt.

Serve: Hot.

Note: *Sambar* powder is a spice blend made with toasted coriander and cumin seeds, peppercorns, red chilies, turmeric, fenugreek, and asafetida. Cutting back on the peppercorns greatly reduces the "heat" of this soup.

