Coconut-Lentil Soup with Vegetables

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Makes
4 servings

Time
1 ½ hours, mostly unattended

I use regular brown lentils here, but you can use red lentils, which cook faster, or the more traditional split pigeon peas known as tavoor dal (available at most Asian and Indian markets); they’re all good. There are so few beans they melt into the background, with the soft vegetables and shreds of coconut left swirling in the complex golden broth. If okra or zucchini isn’t your thing, use about 1 ½ pounds of whatever vegetables you have, in any combination, like winter squash, turnips, or sweet potato, to cauliflower, spinach, eggplant, or green beans.

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons good-quality olive oil
1 onion, chopped
1 tablespoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
Salt and pepper
3 tablespoons curry powder
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 cup chopped fresh tomatoes or 1 15-ounce can diced tomatoes
1/4 cup shredded coconut
1/2 pound okra, trimmed and sliced
1 pound zucchini, trimmed and chopped
1/2 cup dried lentils or split pigeon peas (tavoor dal), rinsed and picked over
4 cups vegetable stock or water
2 cups coconut milk or 1 14-ounce can mixed with a little water
12 fresh basil leaves, or fresh curry leaves if they’re available, torn

**INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Put the oil in a large pot over medium heat. When it’s hot, add the onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft and translucent, 3 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and ginger and cook for another minute. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally and lowering the heat to prevent burning if necessary, until the vegetables are golden and beginning to melt together, 10 to 20 minutes.

2. Turn the heat to medium-high and add the curry powder and turmeric. Cook, stirring frequently, until darkened and fragrant, just a minute or 2. Add the tomatoes, coconut, okra, zucchini, and lentils. Add the stock and coconut milk and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat so that the soup bubbles gently but steadily.

3. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the lentils and vegetables break apart, 30 to 40 minutes; add water as necessary to keep the mixture brothy. Add the basil leaves, stir once or twice, then taste, adjust the seasoning, and serve.

*Recipe from How to Cook Everything Vegetarian*

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