

Lentil Soup with Hot Italian Sausage

"Hot Italian sausage and fresh spinach give this soup its distinctive flavor and appeal. Add a tossed salad and crusty French Bread to complete this hearty meal".

8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 cup sweet onion, diced
- 1/2 cup carrots, peeled and diced
- 1/2 cup celery, diced
- 1 1/2 cups lentils rinsed
- 5 cups fat-free chicken broth
- 2 cups stewed tomatoes, chopped with juices
- 1/3 pound hot Italian sausage, browned and well drained
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon each: dried thyme, basil, fennel seeds (crushed)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups fresh spinach, chopped
- 1 cup fat-free half-and-half

DIRECTIONS:

- In a large soup pot or Dutch oven, warm oil over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Saute until soft, about 5 minutes.
- Add lentils, chicken broth, tomatoes, sausage, and all seasonings including salt. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer for 40 minutes or until lentils are soft.
- During last 5 minutes of cooking, add spinach and half-and-half, stir well, and continue to cook until spinach is wilted, about 3 minutes. (If soup is too thick, add more chicken broth or half-and-half.) Serve Immediately.

The Food and Mood Cookbook by Elizabeth Somer: page 103