

FRENCH LENTIL SOUP

3 tablespoons extra-virgin oil

2 cups chopped onions

1 cup chopped celery stalks, plus chopped celery leaves for garnish

1 cup chopped carrots

2 garlic cloves, chopped

4 cups (or more) vegetable broth

1 ¼ cups lentils, rinsed, drained

1 can (14 ½ oz) can diced tomatoes in juice

Balsamic vinegar (optional)

Heat oil in heavy large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery, carrots, and garlic; sauté until vegetables begin to brown, about 15 minutes. Add 4 cups broth, lentils, and tomatoes with juice and bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer until lentils are tender, about 35 minutes.

Transfer 2 cups soup (mostly solids) to blender and puree until smooth. Return puree to soup in pan; thin soup with more broth by ¼ cupfuls, if too thick. Season with salt, pepper, and a splash of vinegar, if desired. Ladle soup into bowls. Garnish with celery leaves.

Total time: 1 hour, 10 minutes

Serves 6

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