

## **Lentil Vegetable Beef Soup**

Courtesy of Carole's Creations

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cooking Time: 2 hours

Serves: 6 - 8

**CChints:** This is a very healthy soup and you can freeze portions to enjoy on a later date. Make sure to leave 1/2 inch from the top of your freezer container to allow for expansion as the soup freezes. If you don't have fresh herbs you can substitute with 1/2 teaspoons dry in at the beginning of the cooking time.



2 tablespoons olive oil  
1-1/2 pounds stew meat cut into 1 inch pieces  
1/2 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper  
3 stalks of celery, diced  
2 carrots, diced  
1 large yellow onion, diced  
6 gloves minced garlic, fresh or from a jar  
6 – 14 ounce cans low sodium beef broth  
28 ounce can dice tomatoes  
2 dry bay leaves  
16 ounce bag lentils or 2 cups, rinsed and drained  
1-1/2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, chopped or 1/2 teaspoon dry  
1 tablespoon fresh oregano, chopped or 1 teaspoon dry

Heat the oil in a large dutch oven or soup pot over medium high heat. Rinse the beef and cut any large pieces into bite size pieces. Sprinkle with salt and pepper and put it in the pan to brown for about 8 minutes, stirring 2-3 times. If you stir it too much, it won't have a chance to brown. Take the meat out, put it in a bowl and set it aside.

During this cooking time you can prep the celery through garlic. Reduce the heat to medium and add those items to the pan for 5 minutes. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the bottom of the pot to loosen the brown bits from the meat to flavor the vegetables. Return the beef and any juices to the pot. Add the tomatoes, broth and bay leaves to the pot and if you are using dry herbs, now is the time to add them to the pot. Cover and bring the soup to a boil. When it boils, reduce the heat to a simmer for 1 hour until meat is tender.

Stir in the lentils and fresh herbs. Cover and continue cooking for about 40 minutes until lentils are tender.

Serve with crackers and your favorite pickles.