

Vegetable Soup with mustard greens and black lentils

I wouldn't just give three cheers for this soup, I'd give four, or even five. I love how the mustard greens add a brightness and springy spark even though it's the middle of January. Keep in mind that black lentils will turn the stock rather dark. If this bothers you, you can cook the lentils separately, but frankly, I'm not sure why you would, unless dishwashing is a pastime you especially enjoy.

Serves 4

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for a final drizzle at the end
1/2 medium red onion, diced
1 carrot, diced
1 celery stalk, diced
2 garlic cloves, minced
1/3 cup black beluga lentils, picked over, rinsed
One 14.5-ounce can vegetable- or low-sodium chicken broth, or homemade stock
2 small or one medium delicata squash, peeled, diced
1 large bunch mustard greens, leaves yanked off the stems and chopped, stems discarded

In a large sauce pot, heat the olive oil over medium-low heat. Add the onion, carrot, celery, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, and saute until soft, stirring occasionally, about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and saute for 30 seconds, stirring.

Dump in the rinsed lentils, the broth or stock, and the equivalent of 1 can of cold water (just shy of 2 cups). Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer gently, uncovered, for 15 minutes. Add the squash and simmer for 3 minutes.

Toss in the mustard greens and, using tongs, plunge and swirl them so they're submerged. Cook, covered, for about 5 minutes. Adjust the seasonings to taste.

Serve hot, in deep bowls, with a generous drizzle of olive oil.