

LENTIL AND BACON SOUP

Ingredients

1 tsp oil

75g/2¾oz your favourite type of bacon, trimmed of all fat and finely chopped

1 onion, finely chopped

1 red pepper, finely chopped

1.5 litres/3lb 5oz chicken or vegetable stock

1 small sweet potato or small white cooking potato, peeled and finely diced

1 garlic clove or 1 small spoon of lazy garlic

200g/7oz red lentils

large sprig thyme

1 bay leaf

salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the bacon, onion and red pepper. Cook on a low heat for 5 minutes, or until the vegetables have started to soften.

Boil a kettle and use this to make your stock – or if using fresh stock, bring it to the boil in a separate saucepan while the vegetables are cooking.

Add the sweet potato, garlic and lentils to the bacon and vegetables. Stir for a minute, then pour over the just-boiled stock and add the herbs.

Season with salt and pepper. Return to the boil – this should be more or less instant – then turn down to a medium heat, cover, and cook for between 15-20 minutes, or until the red lentils are tender.

Remove the herbs. Blend using a stick-blender if preferred – or you can leave the soup as is. Serve.