

## **Via's Lentil Soup**

### **Ingredients:**

1 red pepper - diced  
1 stalk of celery – chopped finely  
1 large carrot – chopped finely  
2 cloves of garlic - minced  
1 large onion - diced  
1-2 tablespoons tomato paste or crushed tomatoes  
1 package brown lentils (small package – about 550 grams)  
salt and pepper  
paprika  
mint (dried)  
\* 2 medium potatoes - diced

### **Directions:**

Rinse the lentils and pick out any stones. Put in large pot and fill pot with water. Add in the red pepper, celery, carrot, garlic and ½ of the onion (you will use the other half of the onion at the end when you “finish” the soup) If you are using potato, you can add it now as well. (The authentic soup does not have a lot of vegetables, but if you prefer a heartier soup you can add more of the same vegetables). Add salt and pepper to taste.

Bring the soup to a boil and then allow to simmer until the lentils are cooked. (Usually takes about an hour). After about ½ hour from the time you started add in the tomato (if you won't be around you can do this from the beginning).

Once the lentils are cooked you saute the other half of the onion in olive oil (be generous as the oil adds flavor to the soup). When the onions are soft add them to the soup. At this time add paprika (about ½ teaspoon) and add the dried mint. Leave for another 5 minutes for the flavors to absorb and serve.

As the soup is cooking it may become very thick, so you can add more water throughout cooking time until it reaches desired consistency.

\* This is not part of the authentic recipe but I often add potatoes to the soup. It thickens the soup without flour and makes it heartier.