

A close-up photograph of a bowl of roasted red pepper soup. The soup is a vibrant orange-red color and is garnished with several dark, round olives and a single fresh basil leaf. A silver spoon is partially submerged in the soup. The bowl is light green and sits on a textured, light-colored surface. In the background, another similar bowl is visible but out of focus.

Spicy, one-dish meals offer an antidote to the cold

SOUP'S

Roasted Red Pepper Soup
with Basil Cream

Few foods are as satisfying

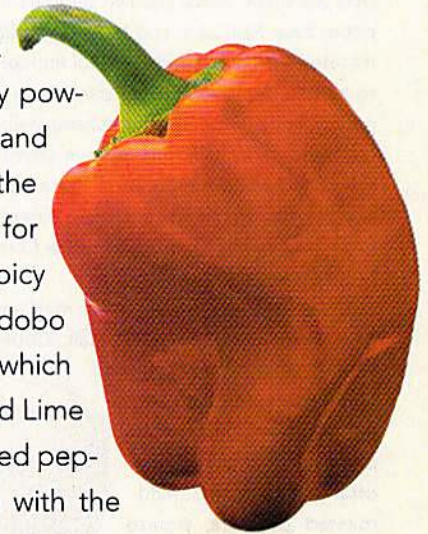
on a brisk winter's day as a bowl of hot soup. Dipping into a hot mug of thick potage is comfort food at its best. It's an easy one-dish meal that warms and nourishes us while steaming up the windows of our kitchen. The best part is that soups will keep refrigerated for days, and then can be easily frozen and reheated.

Most fiery foods come from countries with hot climates, but spicy soups can be uplifting even when the weather is brutally cold. A spicy kick stimulates the senses, making you feel warm from the inside out.

The following soups offer a wide variety of flavors, textures and spiciness. The chickpea soup, which is moderately tangy, gets its gusto from red pepper flakes, particularly when rounded out with a variety of warming spices,

ginger and cinnamon. Horseradish imparts a zesty and complex flavor to the potato-leek soup. In the velvety red lentil soup, the curry powder makes the difference between bland and bold flavors. Jalapeños infuse the broth for the Asian miso soup, with slivered chiles added for good measure—resulting in a soup that's spicy enough to clear your sinuses! Chipotles in adobo sauce are blended into the black bean soup, which is then topped with avocado and a tofu-based Lime Cream to balance the bite. And the roasted red pepper soup has a tingling heat that contrasts with the cooling fresh flavor of a basil-infused tofu cream.

Don't be afraid to experiment with these soups, especially if you prefer them milder or positively incendiary. They all can be adjusted. To raise the heat, simmer any of the soups with a fresh or dried chile. You can blend the chile back into the soup for extra zip. Or add more red pepper flakes, and use warming spices such as ginger. Whichever way you simmer them, these soups are sure to soothe body and spirit all winter long.



Roasted Red Pepper Soup with Basil Cream

6 SERVINGS

This creamy red-orange soup, together with a green basil cream, is cool yet hot and spicy all at the same time.

4 medium red bell peppers
2 Tbs. olive oil
2 cups chopped leeks (white parts only, 4 to 5 leeks)
2 cloves garlic, minced
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
2 Tbs. tomato paste
1 medium boiling potato (¼ lb.), peeled and cut into small cubes
4½ cups low-sodium vegetable broth
1 tsp. red wine vinegar
Basil Cream (see following recipe)

1. To roast peppers: Place peppers directly on grate over gas burner. Turn heat to high, and cook until sides are blistered and charred, turning until peppers are black. Place charred peppers in paper bag. Seal bag, and let sit 15 to 20 minutes. When peppers are cool enough to handle, remove charred skin, using a paring knife if necessary. Alternatively, cut peppers in half, and remove stems, seeds and white membranes. Place cut-side down on greased baking sheet. Broil until evenly charred. Remove from broiler, and proceed as above.

2. In large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add leeks and ½ tsp. salt. Cook, stirring often, until softened, about 8 minutes. Add garlic, pepper flakes and tomato paste, and cook, stirring often, 3 minutes. Add roasted peppers, potato cubes and broth. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until potato cubes are tender, about 15 minutes.

3. Transfer soup to blender or food processor, and process until smooth. Return soup to pot, add another ½ tsp. of salt, a sprinkling of freshly ground pepper and vinegar. Taste, and add more salt if

desired. Serve hot with dollop of Basil Cream swirled into soup.

PER SERVING (WITHOUT CREAM): 102 CAL; 2G PROT; 5G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 15G CARB; 0 CHOL; 13MG SOD; 3G FIBER

Basil Cream

MAKES ¾ CUP 30 MINUTES OR LESS

The fresh flavor of basil is dominant in this cooling cream. Refrigerated, it stays fresh for days. In addition to adding it to the Roasted Red Pepper Soup, you can use this on grains, beans and vegetables.

6 oz. soft silken tofu
½ cup fresh basil leaves (about 25 leaves)
1 Tbs. olive oil
1 Tbs. fresh lemon juice

1. Combine tofu, basil, oil, lemon juice, ¼ tsp. salt and sprinkling of pepper in food processor or blender. Process until smooth. Transfer to small container, cover, and refrigerate at least 15 minutes or until ready to use.

PER TABLESPOON: 18 CAL; 1G PROT; 2G TOTAL FAT (0 SAT. FAT); 1G CARB; 0 CHOL; 49MG SOD; 0 FIBER

Smokey Black Bean Soup and Lime Cream

6 SERVINGS

The deep red-brown of this soup makes it a color cousin to Mexican molé sauce. It makes a dramatic presentation when topped with tortilla strips, avocado chunks and Lime Cream. Chipotle chiles packed in adobo sauce are available in most large supermarkets. Any canned, diced tomatoes will work well, but the fire-roasted variety sends this soup over the top.

2 Tbs. olive oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped (1 cup)
1 stalk celery, finely chopped
½ medium green pepper, chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tsp. ground cumin

1 tsp. dried oregano
1½ cups black beans, soaked and drained
14½-oz. can diced tomatoes, preferably fire-roasted
2 chipotle chiles in adobo sauce
2 Tbs. sherry
3 corn tortillas, cut into ¼-inch-wide strips
½ ripe avocado, cut into small dice
Lime Cream (see following recipe)

1. In large pot, heat 1 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Add onion, celery and green pepper, and cook, stirring often, until vegetables are softened, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, cumin and oregano, and cook, stirring often, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes.

2. Add beans and 6 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until beans are tender, about 1¾ hours. Add 1½ tsp. salt.

3. With slotted spoon, transfer 1 cup beans to food processor or blender. Add tomatoes and chipotles, and process until smooth. Return mixture to pot. Stir in sherry, increase heat and bring soup to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer about 15 minutes to reduce liquid.

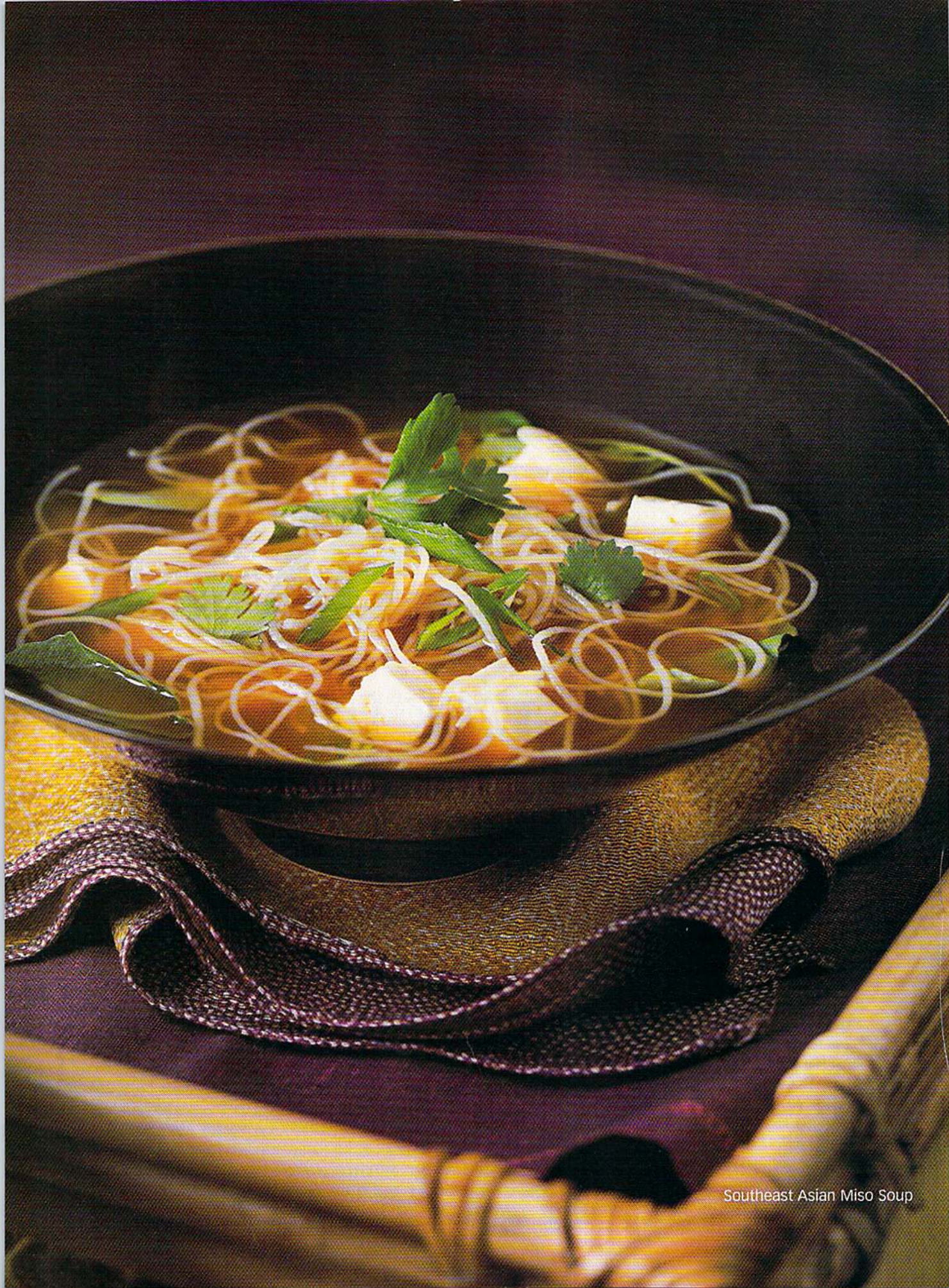
4. Meanwhile, in large nonstick skillet, heat remaining 1 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Add tortilla strips in batches, and toss frequently and gently (for best results, use tongs) to brown evenly, about 3 minutes. Adjust heat as necessary. Remove to paper towels to blot excess oil.

5. Place tortilla strips, avocado and Lime Cream in separate small bowls. Serve soup hot with garnishes along side.

PER SERVING (WITHOUT CREAM OR GARNISHES): 270 CAL; 12G PROT; 8G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 39G CARB; 0 CHOL; 193MG SOD; 10G FIBER

Variation: To make this soup in a pressure cooker, heat 1 Tbs. oil in pressure cooker. Add onion, celery and green pepper. Cook, stirring often, over medium-low heat until vegetables are softened, about 10 minutes. Add garlic, cumin and oregano, and cook another few minutes, until fragrant. Add beans and 4 cups water, and cover. Bring to a boil, lock lid into place, and bring to high pressure. Cook over high pressure 15 minutes. Turn off heat, and let beans return to pressure naturally. Remove lid, and add 1½ tsp. salt. Proceed with Step 3, above.





Southeast Asian Miso Soup

Lime Cream

MAKES 1 CUP

This cooling cream is a great contrast to the spicy soup. It also makes a great all-purpose condiment to enliven beans and grains.

- 6 oz. soft silken tofu
- 2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
- 2 Tbs. vegetable oil
- 2 tsp. brown rice vinegar
- 1 tsp. lime peel
- ¼ tsp. white pepper

1. Combine tofu, lime juice, oil, vinegar, lime peel, pepper and ½ tsp. salt in bowl of food processor. Process until smooth. Transfer to small container, and cover. Refrigerate at least 15 minutes.

PER TABLESPOON: 21 CAL; 1G PROT; 2G TOTAL FAT (0 SAT. FAT); 1G CARB; 0 CHOL; 73MG SOD; 0 FIBER

Moroccan Chickpea Soup

6 SERVINGS

This is a great soup to savor after spending a day skiing or building a snowman. It's soothing and warming, rather than fiery hot. Half the soup is pureed and half is left chunky to combine the best of both textures. A pressure cooker makes this soup super-fast and easy (see Variation below).

- 1½ cups chickpeas, soaked and drained
- 1 bay leaf
- Pinch saffron
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 2 medium onions, chopped (2 cups)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- ½ tsp. ground ginger
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 Tbs. fresh lemon juice
- ½ cup roughly chopped fresh, flat-leaf parsley, plus additional for each bowl

1. In large pot, combine chickpeas, bay leaf, saffron and 7 cups water. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, 1½ hours, until chickpeas are almost tender.

2. In medium skillet, heat oil over

medium heat. Add onions, and cook, stirring often, until softened, about 7 minutes. Add garlic, pepper flakes, cumin, coriander, ginger and cinnamon. Cook, stirring often, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Stir onion mixture into chickpeas, and simmer until chickpeas are completely tender, about 30 minutes. Remove beans from heat, stir in ½ tsp. salt, and let stand 5 minutes.

3. Remove bay leaf. Transfer half of soup to food processor or blender, and process until smooth. Pour purée back into soup. Add additional water, if necessary, to thin soup. Add lemon juice and more salt if desired. Stir in parsley. Serve hot, garnished with extra parsley.

PER SERVING: 295 CAL; 13G PROT; 9G TOTAL FAT (1G SAT. FAT); 43G CARB; 0 CHOL; 21MG SOD; 12G FIBER

Variation: To make this soup in a pressure cooker, heat oil in pressure cooker. Add onions, and cook, stirring often, over medium-low heat until softened, about 7 minutes. Add garlic, pepper flakes, cumin, coriander, ginger and cinnamon. Cook, stir-

ring often, until fragrant, 2 to 3 minutes. Add chickpeas, bay leaf, saffron and 4 cups water. Bring to a boil. Lock lid in place, and bring to high pressure. Cook over high pressure 25 minutes. Let pressure come down naturally; remove lid, and add 1½ tsp. salt. Proceed with Step 3, above.

Potato-Leek Soup with Horseradish

4 TO 6 SERVINGS

30 MINUTES OR LESS

Make this soup without red pepper for something mild yet still flavorful.

- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 3 cups chopped leeks (white parts only, 6 to 7 leeks)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- 1½ lbs. thin-skinned potatoes, peeled and cut into ½-inch chunks
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth or water
- 2 Tbs. prepared horseradish

stock up

Keep a basic stock in quart containers in the freezer to use at a moment's notice. Some soups, such as those made with beans, have so much flavor on their own that a stock is not necessary. Vegetable soups usually benefit from one, especially when the broth is light. You can use packaged vegetable broth as a substitute for homemade, although in some instances the packaged variety may be too harsh. Fortunately, stock-making is neither difficult nor time-consuming. You need only 10 minutes or so to chop the vegetables into rough 1-inch pieces.

A stock is best made in a pot with high sides so that a minimum of water evaporates. Keep your pot uncovered to prevent the stock from clouding. Once the stock is simmering, the remaining cooking time is labor-free.

Our basic stock (p. 47) is quite versatile, and it can be tailored to enhance a specific soup by adding extra ingredients. Feel free to add sweet vegetables such as parsnips, fennel and sweet potatoes if their flavor does not conflict with your soup. Shallots and green beans are tasty in any stock. Specific stocks do well with ginger, lemongrass, corn cobs, mushroom stems, asparagus and tomatoes. Avoid spinach, as it makes stock taste grassy, and onion peels, which give stock a bitter taste and turn it dark. Also avoid the brassica family, which includes cauliflower, cabbage, brussels sprouts and broccoli. Beets, while they are appropriate in some instances, will turn your stock red. And while a stock is a good place to use up bits and pieces of leftover vegetables, do not even consider using anything that is tired or spoiled-looking.

1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
¼ cup fresh dill, plus more
for garnish

1. In soup pot, heat oil. Add leeks, and cook, stirring, over medium-low heat until softened but not browned, about 7 minutes. Add garlic and pepper flakes, and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Add potatoes and broth or water and 1½ tsp. salt. Cover, increase heat, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until potatoes are soft, about 20 minutes. Use back of spoon to mash some of potatoes against sides of pot to thicken broth.

2. Stir in generous sprinkling of freshly ground pepper, horseradish, lemon juice and dill. Taste, and add more salt if desired. Serve hot, sprinkled with fresh dill.
PER SERVING: 243 CAL; 4G PROT; 7G TOTAL FAT (2G SAT. FAT); 43G CARB; 2MG CHOL; 40MG SOD; 4G FIBER

Basic Vegetable Stock

MAKES 5 CUPS

This is very tasty as is, or add other vegetables, such as sweet potatoes, parsnips or fennel, to enhance your winter-warming soup.

1 medium onion, peeled and roughly chopped
1 leek, greens included, cleaned and roughly chopped
2 medium celery stalks, roughly chopped
2 medium carrots, roughly chopped
1 bay leaf
2 cloves garlic, halved
1 medium zucchini, roughly chopped
2 cups chopped Swiss chard
Fresh flat-leaf parsley
Fresh thyme sprigs

1. In large pot or stockpot, add 7 cups water and all ingredients. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until flavor develops, about 45 minutes. Strain, pushing vegetables against strainer to extract as much liquid as possible. Cool. Store in glass jars, and refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze for up to 4 months.

Southeast Asian Miso Soup

4 SERVINGS

This is a bright, attractive twist on the usual miso soup. It's light and energizing and fierce enough to drive away a cold. Don't be intimidated by the long list of ingredients. The stock takes only minutes to get in the pot, and the garnishes are simple.

1 leek, greens included, roughly chopped
1 medium onion, peeled and cut into large dice
1 carrot, peeled and chopped
1 stalk celery, chopped
8 dried shiitake mushrooms
2 lemongrass stalks, cut into 4-inch pieces
2-inch piece fresh ginger, unpeeled and cut into 6 pieces
4 cloves garlic, unpeeled and cut in half
2 jalapeños, cut in half
Handful cilantro stems

GARNISHES

2 oz. rice stick noodles, broken into 3-inch pieces
2 Tbs. dark red miso
4 oz. firm silken tofu, cut into ¼-inch dice (½ box)
1 scallion (white and light green parts), thinly sliced
1 cup watercress (½ bunch, heavy stems removed)
2 Tbs. fresh lime juice
¼ cup cilantro leaves
1 small chile, such as Thai bird or serrano, or small jalapeño, cut into very thin rings, optional

1. In stockpot or large saucepan, combine leeks, onion, carrot, celery, mushrooms, lemongrass, ginger, garlic, jalapeños, cilantro stems and 8 cups water. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, about 35 minutes.

2. Pour stock through a strainer set over a large bowl; discard solids. You should have about 5 cups of stock. If necessary, add water to measure 5 cups. Pour stock back into pot, and reheat if necessary.

3. Bring medium saucepan of water to a boil. Add rice noodles. Let boil 1 minute, turn off heat, and let stand 10 minutes to soften. Drain.

4. Remove ¼ cup stock to small bowl; add miso, and stir until dissolved. Add miso mixture, noodles, tofu, scallions and watercress to stock. Stir in lime juice and cilantro leaves. Serve hot with jalapeño rings floating on top.

PER SERVING: 86 CAL; 4G PROT; 1G TOTAL FAT (0 SAT. FAT); 16G CARB; 0 CHOL; 409MG SOD; 1G FIBER

Red Lentil Soup with Curry and Coconut Milk

4 TO 6 SERVINGS

This velvety smooth soup is especially suited as a light meal with brown rice and vegetables.

3 Tbs. vegetable oil
2 medium onions, chopped (2 cups)
1 cup red lentils
3 medium carrots, peeled and roughly chopped (1 cup)
14-oz. can coconut milk
1 bay leaf
3 cloves garlic, minced
1-inch piece fresh ginger, minced
1 Tbs. curry powder, preferably hot
½ cup chopped cilantro

1. In medium saucepan, heat 2 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Add onions, and cook, stirring often, until onions start to brown, about 10 minutes. Add 4 cups water, lentils, carrots, coconut milk, 1 tsp. salt and bay leaf. Cover, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer, partially covered, until lentils are tender, about 20 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in small skillet, heat remaining 1 Tbs. oil over medium heat. Add garlic, ginger, curry powder and cilantro. Cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Add to soup.

3. Remove bay leaf. In food processor or blender, puree soup in batches until velvety smooth. Taste, and add a bit more salt if desired. Serve hot.

PER SERVING: 399 CAL; 14G PROT; 26G TOTAL FAT (16G SAT. FAT); 33G CARB; 0 CHOL; 33MG SOD; 14G FIBER



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