Main dishes / Türkiye

Turkish Red Lentil Soup

Velvety blended soup of red lentils, cumin, and paprika finished with a swirl of chili-crimson brown butter — warming, silken, and deeply satisfying.

Time 45 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 300 g Split red lentils, rinsed until water runs clear
- ☐ 150 g White onion, finely diced
- ☐ 3 cloves Garlic cloves, minced
- ☐ 120 g Carrot, peeled and roughly diced
- ☐ 8 g Ground cumin
- ☐ 4 g Ground turmeric
- ☐ 6 g Sweet paprika
- ☐ 30 g Tomato paste (double concentrate)
- ☐ 45 ml Olive oil
- ☐ 1400 ml Vegetable stock (or water)
- ☐ 30 ml Fresh lemon juice
- ☐ 10 g Fine salt
- ☐ 40 g Unsalted butter
- ☐ 5 g Dried chili flakes (pul biber / Aleppo preferred)

Let's make it.

01 Warm the olive oil in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion and carrot and cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is soft and translucent and the carrot has begun to soften — about 8 minutes. Add the garlic and cook 1 minute until fragrant. Add the tomato paste and stir vigorously, cooking until it darkens from bright red to a deeper brick color, about 2 minutes. Add the cumin, turmeric, and paprika and stir constantly for 30 seconds until the spices bloom and become very fragrant.

02 Add the rinsed lentils to the pot and stir to coat them in the spiced base. Pour in the stock, add salt, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover partially, and simmer for 20–25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the lentils have completely dissolved into the liquid and the soup is thick and homogeneous.

03 Use a hand blender directly in the pot and blend until completely smooth and silky — 1–2 minutes. Alternatively blend in batches in a countertop blender, filling no more than half full each time. Stir in the lemon juice. Taste and adjust salt and lemon — the soup should be bright and acidic enough to make the back of your throat tingle gently. Return to a gentle simmer and adjust consistency with a little hot water if needed.

04 Melt the butter in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, swirling, until the milk solids turn golden brown and it smells of hazelnuts. Remove from heat and immediately add the chili flakes — they will sizzle and bloom in the hot butter. The butter will turn a deep brick-red almost instantly.

05 Ladle the hot soup into warmed bowls. Swirl a generous teaspoon of the chili butter across the surface of each bowl in a spiral. Serve with lemon wedges and crusty bread on the side. The butter will bleed into the soup as the diner stirs — this is correct and beautiful.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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