

WINTER WARMERS

Versatile and nutritious, pulses are the ideal ingredients for soups to keep the cold at bay

Photographer: MARIE-LOU AVERY

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Puy Lentils with Spinach and Chilli Soup Serves 4-6

You can make this in advance, reheat, and add spinach when ready to serve. For creamy soup, blend in batches until smooth and re-heat. Or, for a change, halve the amount of stock and top with a poached egg

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 stick of celery, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons flat leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon thyme leaves
- Good pinch of chilli flakes
- 12 anchovy fillets, finely chopped (or 70g pancetta or 50 g soft sundried tomatoes)
- 350g dried puy lentils (soaked for 10 minutes and drained thoroughly)

- 1L-1.5L good vegetable stock
- 80g young spinach leaves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Extra-virgin olive oil

TO SERVE

- Warm bread
- 1-2 fresh red chillies, finely chopped, or extra-finely chopped flat leaf parsley

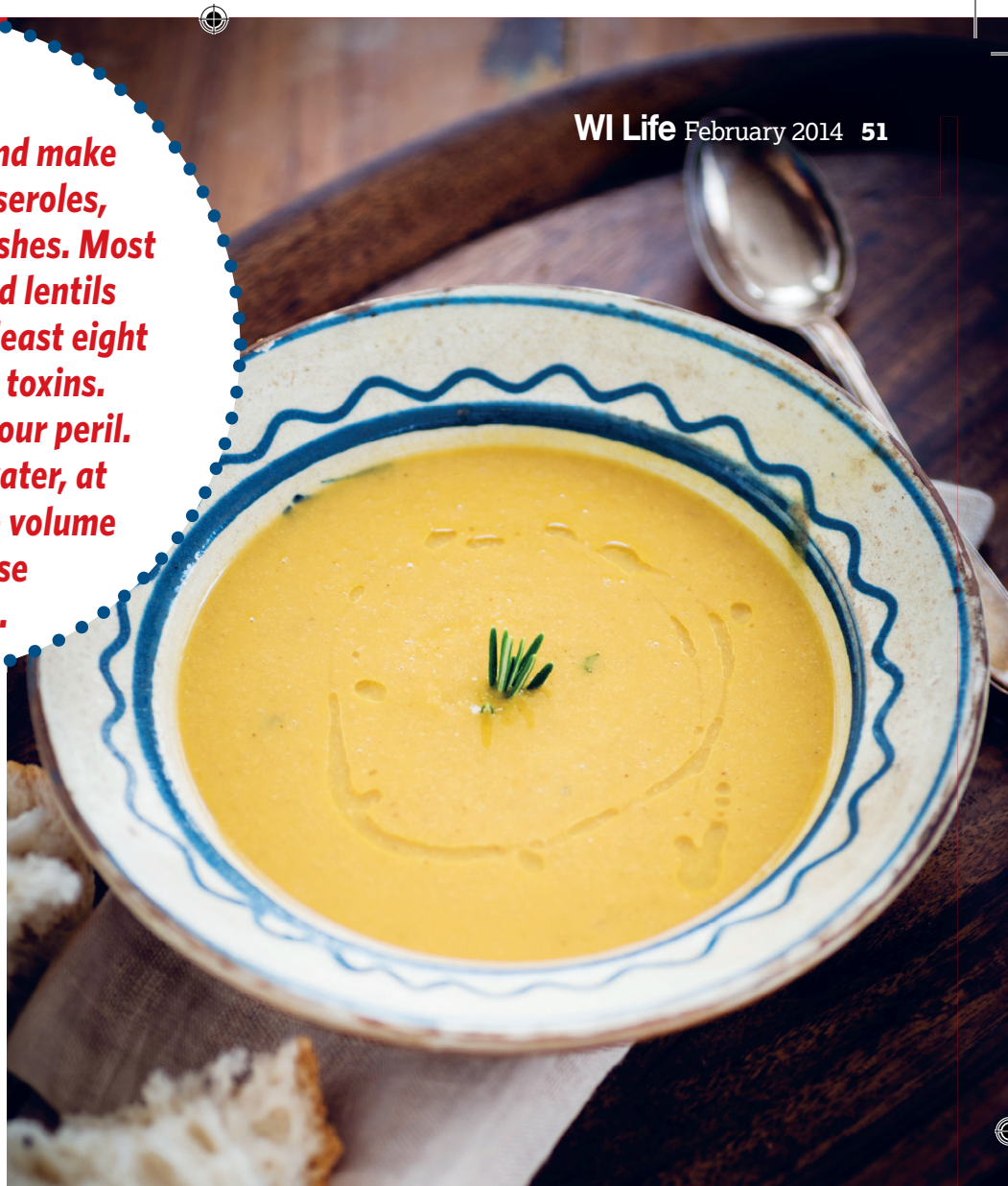
1 Put a large saucepan on low heat. When warm, add enough olive oil to cover base, add the finely chopped garlic, onion,

celery, carrot, parsley, thyme and chilli flakes and cook until transparent. Add anchovy fillets and lentils and stir fry. Add 1L of stock, stir and bring to the boil. Reduce heat, cover and cook over low heat for 20-25 minutes until tender. Stir during cooking time and add salt and pepper towards the end.

2 To serve, stir in spinach leaves and leave for a minute. Sprinkle with finely chopped fresh red chilli or parsley.

Per portion: Energy (kcal) 380, Fat (g) 11, of which Saturates (g) 1.5, Carbohydrate (g) 48, of which Sugars (g) 51

Pulses are healthy and make delicious soups, casseroles, dips, salads and side dishes. Most dried beans, peas and lentils require soaking for at least eight hours to release the toxins. Omit the soaking at your peril. Use plenty of cold water, at least three times the volume of beans - or use tinned pulses.



Creamed Spiced Chickpea and Butternut Squash Soup with Rosemary and Sage Serves 6-8

A striking combination of ingredients makes a for an extra-tasty dish

INGREDIENTS

- 300g (dried weight) chickpeas soaked overnight, rinsed well and strained
- 70g chopped pancetta (or sundried tomatoes for vegetarians), finely chopped
- 2 sticks of celery, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- 1 lump of ginger root, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 heaped teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 heaped teaspoons ground coriander
- 2 heaped teaspoons ground ginger
- 500g butternut squash, peeled and cut into 2cm chunks
- 2 sprigs of rosemary leaves finely chopped
- 7 sage leaves, shredded
- 90ml dry white wine (optional)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Extra rosemary sprigs or shredded sage leaves for serving

1 Put the soaked, rinsed chick peas in a large pan and cover with 3 times their volume of cold water. Bring to the boil, reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

2 Use extra-virgin olive oil to cover base of large pan, add the chopped pancetta, celery, onion, carrot, ginger root, garlic and spices; fry until transparent.

3 Add the butternut squash chunks, chopped rosemary and shredded sage and stir fry for a few minutes.

4 Add the wine and leave to evaporate.

5 Add the chickpeas and cooking water and simmer over low heat for 1 hour/until tender.

6 Pour off two-thirds of cooking water and reserve to adjust soup thickness if necessary. Purée the chickpeas with remainder of the cooking liquid. Resulting soup should be thick and smooth. Taste and season with plenty of salt and freshly milled black pepper and reheat.

7 Pour the soup into serving bowls; serve with a touch of extra-virgin olive oil, top with a little sprig of rosemary or shredded sage leaves and warm bread.

Per portion: Energy (kcal) 330, Fat (g) 13, of which Saturates (g) 2, Carbohydrate (g) 37, of which Sugars (g) 8, Salt (g) 0.5

Minestrone with Mixed Beans Serves 6-8

The idea is to use whatever vegetables are in season, so vary the ingredients to suit what you have

INGREDIENTS

- 300g mixed beans (soaked for 8-12 hours in cold water and rinsed well)
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 cloves garlic
- 50g flat leaf parsley stalks and leaves
- 1 sprig of rosemary leaves
- 70g pancetta or streaky bacon or sundried tomatoes for vegetarians
- 2 carrots
- 2 celery stalks
- 1 large onion
- 1 small cabbage
- 6 plum tomatoes, skinned, deseeded and chopped or 1 tin whole plum tomatoes, drained, deseeded and chopped
- 1 teaspoon of thyme leaves
- 2 handfuls of risotto rice or short pasta

- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Extra finely chopped flatleaf parsley and Parmigiano Reggiano for serving

1 Put soaked and rinsed beans in 3 times their volume of cold water, add the bay leaves, bring to the boil and cook until tender, stirring from time to time (1 hour but see packet guidelines). This minestrone should be thick and gloopy rather than watery.

2 Meanwhile, chop the garlic, parsley, rosemary and pancetta (or sundried tomatoes) finely. Cut the carrot and celery into small cubes and slice the onion finely. Shred and reserve the cabbage. When the beans are tender, strain (reserving cooking water) and liquidise half of the beans with

some of the cooking water and reserve.

Put the chopped garlic, parsley, rosemary, pancetta (or tomatoes), carrot and celery in a large saucepan with the sliced onion and 6 tablespoons of extra-virgin olive oil. Fry gently over medium heat until tender.

3 Stir in the tomatoes, thyme leaves, the whole and the liquidised beans, stirring all the while. Add the reserved cooking water and stir again. Add salt and pepper and cook over low heat for 30 minutes.

4 To serve, top up pan with boiling water, reheat and stir in shredded cabbage. Add risotto rice or short pasta and cook until tender, say 20 minutes. Then add extra parsley and grated Parmigiano.

Per portion: Energy (kcal) 431, Fat (g) 21, of which Saturates (g) 4, Carbohydrate (g) 45, of which Sugars (g) 9, Salt (g) 0.7

