

CURRIED-SQUASH AND RED-LENTIL SOUP

[RUTH COUSINEAU](#) GOURMET FEBRUARY 2009

Sweet butternut squash, earthy red lentils, and curry powder are the stars of this lively vegetarian soup that's wonderful ladled over basmati rice. A drizzle of cilantro oil heightens the wow factor.

YIELD - Makes 4 to 6 (main course) servings

ACTIVE TIME - 25 min TOTAL TIME - 1 1/4 hr

INGREDIENTS

1. For soup:

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 1/2 pound butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 celery rib, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 tablespoons minced peeled ginger
- 1 tablespoon curry powder (preferably Madras)
- 1 cup red lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 2 quarts water
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice, or to taste

2. For cilantro oil:

- 1/2 cup chopped cilantro
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil

3.

Accompaniment: cooked basmati rice

PREPARATION

Make soup:

1. Heat oil with butter in a large heavy pot over medium heat until foam subsides, then cook squash, onion, carrot, celery, garlic, ginger, and 1 teaspoon salt, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and beginning to brown, 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Stir in curry powder and 1/4 teaspoon pepper and cook, stirring frequently, 2 minutes.
3. Add lentils and water and simmer, covered, until lentils are tender, 25 to 40 minutes. Stir in lemon juice and season with salt and pepper.

Make cilantro oil:

4. Purée cilantro, oil, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a blender.
5. Serve soup drizzled with cilantro oil.

Cooks' note:

Soup, without cilantro oil, can be made 3 days ahead and chilled.