

## Sara's Maundy Thursday Lentil Soup

55 minutes total – 8 servings

2 medium carrots, peeled and chopped (you don't have to peel if organic)  
1 large onion (I prefer sweet onion), chopped  
2 stalks celery, chopped  
1 large bell pepper, chopped  
1 Tbsp olive oil  
8 oz white or baby bella mushrooms, presliced or sliced  
1 Tbsp minced garlic  
1/3 cup fresh basil coarsely chopped  
1 cup dry lentils  
1 (28-oz) can crushed or diced tomatoes  
2 Tbsp tomato paste  
4 cups vegetable stock or broth  
¼ cup balsamic vinegar  
1 Tbsp dried mix of herbs like oregano, basil, sage, thyme, rosemary  
½ tsp crushed red pepper (optional – definitely gives it a bite!)  
1 tsp kosher salt or to taste  
½ tsp pepper

1. Preheat large stockpot on medium-high 2-3 minutes. Place oil in pot. Add carrots, onion, celery and pepper. Cook and stir 6 – 8 minutes until onions are very translucent. Add mushrooms and garlic. Cook and stir 3-4 minutes or until mushrooms have softened. Chop basil.
2. Stir in lentils, tomatoes, tomato paste, stock, vinegar, herbs, crushed red pepper, salt, pepper, and half the basil. Bring to a boil, then cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer 30 – 35 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until soup has thickened and lentils have cooked.
3. Add the basil on top of each serving. Serve with crusty bread

### Variations:

If I want the soup to be even more robust, I sauté a few plant-based sausages (my favorite is Field Roast) in a frying pan and add it at the end.

Also, to make a Bolognese sauce over zucchini noodles or pasta, I reduce the stock to 2 cups—delicious as well!