

## Lentil Soup with Squash

2 Tbsp olive oil or ghee  
1/2 red onion, chopped  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1-inch piece ginger, peeled and minced  
1/2 tsp each: turmeric, ground cumin, ground coriander, garam masala  
1 bay leaf  
1 1/2 cups red lentils, washed  
1/2 butternut squash, peeled, seeded and chopped \* see note below  
(or substitute with canned pureed pumpkin, unsweetened)  
5 cups stock or broth  
(if using plain water instead, season the soup with 1 tsp sea salt)  
garnishes (see below)

In a large pot, heat the oil or ghee and stir in onion, garlic and ginger. Let cook over medium-high til softened and just light browned. Add spices and bay leaf, stirring in. Add lentils, squash and stock and stir over high heat til boiling. Spoon off any froth that rises to the surface. Lower heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 25 minutes.

When squash is soft and lentils are fully cooked (about 20-25 minutes), remove bay leaf and puree the soup til silky smooth, or leave as-is (I pureed just a bit). Serve into soup bowls. Top with a dollop of plain yogurt, some sliced onions fried with garlic, fresh chopped cilantro, or stir in fresh baby spinach leaves -- or just keep it simple! Serves 4.

\*I like to roast my squash as opposed to cutting the tough skin off before, so it is up to you how you want to approach it. I simply cut the squash in half in a roasting pan with 1 inch of water, place in a 350 degree oven for 45 minutes or until you are able to pierce it through with a fork. This can be done ahead of time in the morning while getting ready for work, and then later all that needs to be done is scooping it out in chunks and adding to the soup the last 10 minutes to warm through. It really is easy.