GREEK LENTIL SOUP

GREEK LENTIL AND SPINACH SOUP WITH LEMON
(Makes 12 cups; serves 8)

Adapted from *Dairy Hollow House Soup & Bread* by Crescent Dragonwagon (1992). Featured in column by Joe Yonan in the *Washington Post*, 3/7/20.

1 pound brown or large green lentils, rinsed and picked over
10 cups vegetable broth or water
1 jalapeño pepper, stemmed, seeded and chopped
2 teaspoons whole coriander seeds
1 1/2 teaspoons cumin seeds
2 1/2 teaspoons dried oregano
2 bay leaves
2 medium Yukon Gold, russet or red potatoes (1 1/4 pounds total), scrubbed or peeled and cut into 1/2-inch dice
10 ounces baby spinach, chopped
1 small butternut squash (1 pound), peeled, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch dice (3 cups)
1 large yellow onion (12 ounces), chopped
1/4 to 1/3 cup sherry, white wine or broth
2 ribs celery, with leaves, sliced
3 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/2 tsp salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, or more to taste
Juice of one lemon
2 additional lemons

Step 1: In a large pot over medium-high heat, combine the lentils, stock or water, jalapeño, coriander, cumin, oregano and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low. Simmer, partially covered, until the lentils are tender, about 30 minutes.

Step 2: Add the potatoes, spinach and butternut squash, re-cover and cook until the potatoes and squash are tender, another 15 to 20 minutes.

Step 3: Meanwhile, in a large skillet over medium heat, heat the sherry or other liquid. Add the onion, and cook, stirring, until it starts to soften, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the celery and garlic and cook, stirring often, until they soften, 3 minutes. Add the mixture to the soup, deglazing the skillet with a little bit of the broth from the soup, then add the deglazed contents back to the soup pot. Season with the salt and pepper, taste, and add more if needed. Discard the bay leaves.

Step 4: Juice a lemon or pulverize its flesh in a food processor or blender. Thinly slice one of the lemons and cut the other into wedges. Just before serving, stir the chunky lemon juice into the soup. Serve the soup hot, with a lemon slice floating atop each bowl. Pass lemon wedges at the table.




