

Lentil Walnut Salad

- 2 1/2 cups Beluga or French green lentils
- 5 cups water
- 2 tbsps sherry vinegar
- 1 carrot, finely diced
- 2 celery stalks, finely diced
- 1/2 large yellow onion, finely diced
- 1 red bell pepper, finely diced
- 1 large shallot, minced
- 1/2 chopped Castelveltrano or green olives
- 2 tbsps walnut oil
- 1/2 bunch Italian parsley, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup toasted walnuts
- sea salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Sort and rinse the lentils. Place lentils and water in a heavy bottom soup pot. Bring to a boil. Turn heat to medium and cook just until tender, about 30 minutes. Place lentils in a colander to drain off excess water. Place cooked lentils in a large mixing bowl to cool. Once cool, toss the lentils with vinegar, sea salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons olive oil on medium-high heat. Add the diced carrots, celery and yellow onion. Sauté with a good pinch of salt until tender, about 6-8 minutes. Add the cooked vegetables to the lentils. Stir in remaining ingredients. Season to taste with sherry vinegar, sea salt and pepper.

Variations to add to finished lentil salad:

- 1/2 cup diced cucumbers
- 1/2 cup crumbled goat cheese
- 2 tbsps fresh mint, chopped
- 1 cup halved heirloom cherry tomatoes