RECIPE

Lentil walnut loaf

A lentil, walnut and oat loaf with mushrooms and a tomato glaze, a meatless dinner that slices and freezes well.

MAKES

8 servings US Metric

TOTAL

1 h 35 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 cup dry brown lentils, rinsed
- [ ] 2 ½ cups water, for cooking the lentils
- [ ] 1 bay leaf
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 large onion, finely chopped
- [ ] 1 medium carrot, finely chopped
- [ ] 1 medium stalk celery, finely chopped
- [ ] 3 cups sliced cremini mushrooms (about 8 oz)
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 1 cup chopped walnuts
- [ ] 80 g rolled oats (a scant cup)
- [ ] 2 tbsp ground flaxseed
- [ ] 4 tbsp water, to stir with the flaxseed
- [ ] 3 tbsp no-salt-added tomato paste, for the loaf
- [ ] 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar, for the loaf

Method

1. Put the lentils, the 2½ cups water and the bay leaf in a pot. Bring to a boil, then turn down to a gentle simmer, covered. At 5,300 ft water boils near 203 °F, so give them 25 to 30 minutes instead of the usual 20. They are done when they are soft but still hold their shape. Drain any water left, take out the bay leaf and let the lentils cool.

2. Stir the flaxseed and the 4 tablespoons water in a small bowl. Leave it 5 minutes to turn thick and gluey. Meanwhile, toast the walnuts in a wide dry pan over medium heat for 4 minutes, shaking the pan, until they smell nutty. Tip them out, cool, then chop fine.

- [ ] 1 tsp smoked paprika
- [ ] 1 tsp dried oregano
- [ ] 1 tsp dried thyme
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ¾ tsp salt
- [ ] 2 tbsp no-salt-added tomato paste, for the glaze
- [ ] 1 tbsp maple syrup, for the glaze
- [ ] 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar, for the glaze

3 Heat the oven to 375 °F. In the same pan, warm the oil and cook the mushrooms with the garlic powder, paprika, oregano, thyme and pepper for 8 to 10 minutes, until they have given up their water and it has cooked off. Add the onion, carrot and celery and cook 6 minutes more, until soft.

4 In a large bowl, mash half the cooled lentils with a fork against the side until pasty. Stir in the flaxseed mix, the 3 tablespoons tomato paste, the 1 tablespoon balsamic and the salt, then the oats. Fold in the whole lentils, the vegetables and the walnuts. It should hold together when squeezed in your hand.

5 Line a 9 by 5-inch loaf pan with parchment. Press the mixture in firmly, packing the corners, and smooth the top. Bake 25 minutes.

6 Stir the 2 tablespoons tomato paste, the maple syrup and the second tablespoon of balsamic in a small bowl. Pull the pan out, spread the glaze over the loaf and bake 15 minutes more, until the glaze is dark and shiny and the edges pull away from the pan. Oven heat is not changed by altitude (Colorado State University Extension), so go by those signs.

7 Rest the loaf in the pan 15 minutes. It firms as it cools, and it slices cleanly only after this rest. Lift it out by the parchment and cut 8 slices with a serrated knife.

8 Cool leftovers no more than 2 hours, then refrigerate. Reheat slices to 165 °F. Wrap slices singly and freeze up to 1 month; reheat from frozen.