RECIPE

Smoky lentil tacos

A vegetarian dinner of smoky lentil tacos (vegan without the cheese) on warm corn tortillas with lime cabbage, in the plant-first way Nicoya's oldest eat beans and corn, with about 525 mg sodium a serving.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

55 min

Ingredients

- [ ] 1 cup dry brown lentils, rinsed
- [ ] 3 cups water, for simmering the lentils
- [ ] 1 tbsp olive oil
- [ ] 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] 2 tsp chili powder
- [ ] 1 tbsp ground cumin
- [ ] 2 tsp smoked paprika
- [ ] ½ tsp dried oregano
- [ ] 2 tbsp no-salt-added tomato paste
- [ ] ¼ cup chopped walnuts
- [ ] ½ tsp salt, for the lentils
- [ ] 3 cups shredded green cabbage
- [ ] 2 limes, juiced (about 6 tbsp)
- [ ] 0 tsp salt, for the cabbage
- [ ] 1 cup chopped fresh cilantro

Method

1. Put the oil in a large, deep skillet over medium heat. Cook the onion for 5 minutes, until soft and just turning gold.

2. Stir in the garlic powder, chili powder, cumin, smoked paprika, oregano and tomato paste. Stir for 1 minute, until the paste darkens a shade and smells toasty.

3. Add the lentils, the ½ tsp salt and the 3 cups water. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat down so it simmers gently. Cover with the lid cracked. At 5,300 ft water boils near 203 °F, so lentils take about a quarter longer than the 25 to 30 minutes a sea-level pot takes: 31 to 38 minutes. Stir every 10 minutes.

- [ ] 2 slices reduced-fat cheddar (21 g each), chopped
- [ ] 12 corn tortillas (6-inch)

4. They are done when a lentil is tender all the way through and the pan is nearly dry. If it dries out before they are tender, add water ¼ cup at a time and count it as water, not food. If it is still soupy, cook with the lid off for 3 to 5 minutes.

5. While the lentils cook, toss the cabbage with the juice of 1 lime and the ⅛ tsp salt in a bowl. Set it aside to soften.

6. Toast the walnuts in a dry small pan over medium heat for 3 minutes, stirring, until they smell nutty. Stir them into the lentils with the juice of the second lime.

7. Warm the tortillas one at a time in a dry skillet over medium-high heat, 20 to 30 seconds a side, until soft with a few brown spots. Stack them in a clean towel to keep warm.

8. Fill each tortilla with a spoonful of lentils, a little cabbage, some cheese and cilantro. Serve 3 tacos a plate.

9. Cool leftover filling in a shallow container within 2 hours, then refrigerate. Reheat to 165 °F, stirring, with a splash of water. The filling freezes for 3 months; thaw overnight in the fridge.