

SHORBAT ADAS B'HAMOD

Lentilles du Puy & Rainbow Chard Soup

This oh-so-perfect soup, tartened by lemon juice, is so versatile that I make it year round with seasonal produce found at our local farmer's markets. Serve hot or cold.

1 1/4-to-1 1/2 cups Lentilles du Puy (French green lentils)
13-to-14 cups water
3 tablespoons vegeta (vegetable, herb and spice seasoning)
2 bunches rainbow chard, silverbeet or swiss chard, triple washed
1/3-to-1/2 cup olive oil
2 cups finely diced onion
a pinch of sugar
2 cups cilantro leaves, triple washed, cut into thin ribbons
2 large heads of garlic, about 18 cloves, minced
3-to-4 tablespoons chili sauce
1/3 teaspoon white pepper
1/2 teaspoon ground coriander seeds, optional
1 tablespoon clarified butter, optional
1 1/2 cups cooked barley, washed in several changes of water to remove starch
1 1/2 cups cooked shelled romano beans
1/2-to-3/4 cups freshly squeezed lemon juice
sea salt or Himalayan pink salt, as needed

Prepare chard. Trim off any bruised and brown parts then triple wash greens first under running water, second in salted water and lastly in plain water. Separate leaves from bottom stem and cut into large square pieces. Dice stem into even sized cubes.

In a 6-Qt pot or larger add lentils, water and vegeta. Bring contents to a gentle boil, reduce heat to medium low and simmer covered for 10 minutes. Add chard stems and cook uncovered for 5 minutes. Add chard leaves and cook for another 10 minutes.

Meanwhile prepare what I refer to as Lebanese "sofrito" or "pesto". In a saucepan, heat oil and sauté onions with a pinch of sugar until over-translucent but not caramelized. Add cilantro and stir cook for 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant. Remove from heat and mix in chili sauce, white pepper and coriander and clarified butter if using.

To the soup pot add cooked barley, shelled romano beans and garlic-cilantro "sofrito". Add lemon juice and salt to taste and continue cooking for a couple of more minutes until thoroughly heated.