

German Lentil Soup

Here is the “bean” soup recipe that I made up for the Lenten Supper. It actually originated with The Shadows Restaurant, a German restaurant on Telegraph Hill in San Francisco that closed down many years ago. When they started to serve a table, they brought you a small dinner salad and a soup bowl. They then brought a tureen of this soup, ladled some into each patrons bowl, then left the tureen on the table for those who wanted “seconds.” Most folks did. In the early 60’s I lived next door to The Shadows, and I used to get pots of this soup any time I got a cold. It may not have cured the common cold, but it was certainly comfort food in the classic sense.

Ingredients

1½ Cups dried lentils
4 oz. thinly sliced bacon, cut into small squares
1 Lg. or 2 med. Onions, finely chopped
2-3 Med. Carrots, small dice
6 Stalks Celery, small dice
3-6 Cloves garlic, to taste, minced
1 Lg. or 2 med. waxy type potatoes, peeled and cut into ¼” dice
2 Whole cloves (place these and bay leaves that follow in cheese cloth bundle)
3 Bay leaves
2 Quarts Turkey stock*
2 Tbsp Amore tomato paste**
2 Tbsp red wine vinegar
1½ Cup garlic sausage (kielbasa or polish), cut into 1/8” thin slices
2 Leeks, white portions only, sliced thin
1 tsp. salt
Plenty of freshly ground pepper, to taste

Soak lentils in 1 qt of the stock overnight in the refrigerator (they will double in bulk).

In a stock pot, sauté bacon until it is partially crisp, then add onions, carrots and celery. When vegetables are tender, add garlic and sauté 2-3 minutes longer. Add lentils soaked in stock, remaining stock, potatoes, cloves and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer, partially covered, until the lentils are tender (probably an hour or two, you be the judge), stirring occasionally. You may have to add some water if it becomes too thick. Skim off the scum that develops on top from time to time. Remove spice packet. Place about half of the soup stock in a blender and puree, then add back to the pot (this will make for a smoother soup).

Add tomato paste, vinegar, garlic sausage, leeks, salt and pepper. Cook until leeks are tender, about ½ hour. Adjust seasoning to taste. You may wish to skim off any fat that cooks out of the sausage – I do.

*Turkey stock is a “must” for this soup – chicken stock will not do. The Fresh Market usually has it, or you can get “Better Than Bullion” turkey base in the soup section at Ingles.

**This is available in Ingles. It comes in a tube which is packaged in a box, and is so much better than any other tomato paste you can buy.

Enjoy