

Lentil Salad

2 cups French lentils	2 teaspoons fresh basil
1 bay leaf	2 teaspoons fresh mint
1 red pepper	2 teaspoons fresh oregano
3 Persian cucumbers	½ cup chopped parsley
1 carrot	1 large lemon
2 celery stalks	2 teaspoons Sherry vinegar
3 scallions	1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 cup Kalamata olives	⅔ cup olive oil
2 teaspoons fresh thyme	Salt and pepper to taste
1 teaspoon fresh rosemary	

Bring a pot of salted water with a bay leaf to the boil. Wash the lentils. Add the lentils to the boiling water, and turn down the heat to a simmer. Cook for about 20 minutes or until just tender, but not at all mushy. Discard the bay leaf, drain the lentils, refresh under cold water, and transfer them to a large bowl.

Cut the red pepper, cucumbers, carrot, celery, and scallions into small dice. Slice the Kalamata olives and add them, along with the chopped vegetables, to the lentils.

Add all, or your own selection, of the fresh herbs to the lentils, and mix in thoroughly. If you don't have fresh herbs, you can substitute dried.

Zest the lemon, and add all of the grated zest to the lentils. In a small bowl, juice the lemon. Add the Sherry vinegar, the Dijon mustard, and some salt, and whisk until well combined. Gradually whisk in the olive oil. Grind in some fresh black pepper.

Mix the dressing into the lentils, and taste for seasoning. Add the chopped parsley. The salad is best if sits for at least half an hour before serving. It can also be refrigerated, but for maximum flavor, remove it at least an hour before serving, because it's more flavorful at room temperature.