LENTIL SOUP WITH WHOLE-WHEAT BREAD



A Warm, Comforting Bowl for Little Eaters

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This simple lentil soup combines tender lentils, carrots, tomatoes, and onion in a mild, comforting broth. It's an easy family-friendly meal that can be adjusted to suit your toddler's preferred texture, from gently mashed to soft and slightly chunky. Serve it with a small piece of soft whole-wheat bread for a satisfying lunch or dinner.

Prep Time: 10 minutes
Cook Time: 25–35 minutes
Total Time: 35–45 minutes
Yield: 3–4 toddler portions

YOU'LL NEED

- **½ cup dry red or brown lentils**
- **1 small carrot, finely diced**
- **½ cup chopped fresh tomato or no-salt-added canned tomato**
- **2 tablespoons finely chopped onion**
- **2 cups water or low-sodium broth**
- **1 teaspoon olive oil**
- **Small piece of soft whole-wheat bread for serving**

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO

1. Rinse the lentils: Place the lentils in a fine-mesh strainer and rinse thoroughly under cool running water. Remove any small debris.
2. Warm the oil: Heat the olive oil in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat.
3. Cook the vegetables: Add the finely chopped onion and carrot. Cook gently for about 3–4 minutes, stirring occasionally, until they begin to soften.
4. Add tomatoes: Stir in the chopped tomatoes and cook for another minute.
5. Add lentils: Pour in the rinsed lentils and stir to combine.
6. Add liquid: Pour in the water or low-sodium broth.
7. Bring to a boil: Bring the mixture to a gentle boil.
8. Simmer: Reduce the heat, cover partially, and simmer until the lentils and vegetables are completely tender. Red lentils generally cook faster than brown lentils, so check the package directions and adjust the cooking time.
9. Check consistency: Stir occasionally and add a little more water if the soup becomes too thick.
10. Adjust the texture: Allow the soup to cool slightly. Mash some of the lentils and vegetables with a fork for a softer, thicker consistency, or blend a portion if your toddler prefers a smoother soup.
11. Prepare the bread: Cut a small piece of soft whole-wheat bread into manageable pieces, removing any tough crust if needed.
12. Cool and serve: Allow the soup to cool to a comfortable serving temperature before offering it with the bread.

Toddler-Friendly Serving Tips

- Make sure the lentils and carrots are very soft before serving.
- Mash any firm vegetable pieces and check the soup for an appropriate consistency.
- Avoid serving the soup piping hot.
- Offer bread in small, manageable pieces with a soft texture.
- Start with a small bowl and offer more if your toddler is still hungry.
- Keep your child seated upright and supervise closely while eating.

Toddler Tip: Keep Some Texture

You don't need to make the soup completely smooth. A soft, slightly textured soup can help your child explore different food consistencies as their feeding skills develop.
If your toddler is still getting comfortable with textured foods, mash the soup more thoroughly and adjust gradually according to their abilities.

Easy Variations

- Creamier Lentil Soup: Mash or blend a portion of the cooked lentils into the broth for a thicker consistency.
- Extra Vegetables: Add finely diced zucchini or sweet potato and cook until very soft.
- Gentle Seasoning: Add a small pinch of mild cumin for extra flavor, if already familiar to your toddler.
- Different Lentils: Red lentils create a softer, creamier soup, while brown lentils generally retain more shape after cooking.

Make-Ahead and Storage Tips

- Refrigerator: Cool the soup promptly and refrigerate in an airtight container at 40°F (4°C) or below. Use within 3–4 days.
- Freezer: Freeze cooled soup in small, individual portions for up to 2–3 months for best quality.
- Reheating: Thaw frozen portions in the refrigerator when possible. Reheat thoroughly until steaming hot, stir well, and cool to a comfortable serving temperature.
- Bread: Prepare fresh bread pieces just before serving rather than storing them mixed into the soup.
- Make Ahead: The soup can be prepared a day in advance, making lunchtime or dinner preparation easier.

A Little Mealtime Reminder

Lentils are a simple pantry ingredient that can become a comforting meal for the whole family. Keep the seasoning mild, adjust the texture to your toddler's abilities, and let little ones explore the soup at their own pace.

Warm, hearty, and made with simple everyday ingredients—a little bowl of comfort for your toddler.