

Quickish Country Lentil Soup with Sausage

If you're in the mood for a simple, warming, home-style soup but don't have time to let things simmer all day, give this one a try—prep time is also shorter because you can chop as you go. If you have a little extra time, substitute 1 cup of dried French lentils for the canned variety. Add them to the pot along with the chicken broth and tomatoes and simmer for about 30 minutes before adding the cooked sausage back in.

Serve the soup with a simple green salad and/or good crusty bread.

TIME: 30 minutes

SHOP: UP TO THREE DAYS AHEAD (Because the veggies will last up to a week in the fridge, you can also skip the salad, freeze the sausage and bread, and make this a full week after your shopping day—just remember to thaw the sausage the night before in the fridge and reheat the bread in the oven before serving.)

MAKES: 8 servings

- 1 pound sweet Italian sausages (pork or turkey)
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 4 celery ribs, chopped into 1/2" pieces
- 3 large carrots, peeled and chopped into 1/4" thick pennies
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup dry white wine
- 4 cups (1-liter box) chicken broth
- 2 (15-ounce) cans lentils, with their liquid
- 1 (15-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- Dash hot pepper sauce, such as Tabasco (optional)

Using a small sharp knife, split the casing on each sausage along its entire length. Remove the casing and discard, leaving just the sausage meat.

Heat a large soup pot over medium heat. When hot, add the oil, then crumble the sausage into the pot. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the meat is cooked through and beginning to brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer the sausage to a paper towel-lined plate to drain, leaving a thin layer of liquid in the bottom of the pot.

Add the onion to the pot and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add the celery, carrots, garlic, and thyme, season with salt and pepper,

and cook another 5 minutes, or until the celery begins to soften. Increase heat to high, add the white wine, and simmer until most of the liquid has evaporated, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add the chicken broth, lentils, tomatoes, and cooked sausage, and bring the soup to a simmer. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, and season to taste with salt, pepper, and optional Tabasco sauce (just a few drops will do). Serve immediately.

TO FREEZE: Allow the soup to come to room temperature (or refrigerate it overnight), then freeze in airtight plastic containers for up to 2 months.