

Red Lentil Spinach Dal

A superb meatless, protein-packed dish inspired by Jill Dupleix, British-based food writer for *The Times*. Red lentils are easy to find, cook quickly and turn gorgeously pink colour when cooked. You could use green or yellow lentils – just cook them longer. This is medium-hot; for less heat, omit pepper flakes.

1 cup red lentils, rinsed, drained
3 cups water
1 bunch fresh spinach, stems removed, washed
2 tbsp vegetable oil
1 medium onion, peeled, chopped
1 tbsp grated fresh ginger root
1 fresh jalapeno or Serrano chile, seeded, chopped
1 tsp each: ground cumin, ground coriander and salt
½ tsp ground turmeric
½ tsp hot red pepper flakes or about ¼ tsp cayenne
1½ cups canned tomatoes with juices, chopped
1 tsp garam masala
Chopped fresh coriander

In medium saucepan, bring lentils and water to boil; reduce heat to low and simmer, skimming off scum, partly covered, 15 to 20 minutes or until soft.

In skillet or saucepan, cook spinach over medium heat in water that clings to leaves, covered, until wilted, 3 to 4 minutes. Drain; chop coarsely.

In large skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and ginger; cook about 5 minutes. Add chile, cumin, coriander, salt, turmeric and pepper flakes; cook about 3 minutes. Add tomatoes; cook about 3 minutes more. Stir in cooked lentils, garam masala and chopped spinach. Cook until heated through. Garnish with coriander.

Makes about 4 to 6 servings.