

Spicy Chickpea Soup

I first made this recipe during a cold, wet March in Austin. The good news is, I happen to love soup and have an endless array of recipes to help us wait out these Austin-style cold fronts.

My daughter Kate shared this recipe when she gifted me a jar of homemade harissa paste. While she hasn't yet shared the harissa paste recipe (hmmmm), I have continued to make the soup with this ready-made blend from Vermont's Teeny Tiny Spice company, and it is delicious.

Chickpeas are a wonderful plant-based protein to be served in the evening when your body can spare the extra energy it takes to digest and is preparing for long stretch of sleep. Chickpeas are neutral when it comes to pH, so start your meal with a high alkaline serving of mixed greens or kale salad to balance things out.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 small onions, cut into 3/8 inch (1 cm) dice
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 3/8 inch (1 cm) dice
- 4 celery stalks, cut into 3/8 inch (1 cm) dice
- 2 T harissa paste or 1 T harissa spice blend
- 1 t freshly ground cumin
- 1 t freshly ground coriander
- 1 1/2 t whole caraway seeds
- 2 1/2 C (500 g) drained cooked chickpeas (canned are fine, but rinse well)
- 4-5 C (1 liter) water
- 3/4 C (100 g) coarse bulgur wheat (or rice, millet or quinoa all substitute well)

- 3 t fine grain salt, or to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- Cilantro, chopped
- One lemon
- Dukka seasoning, optional

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a saucepan. Add onions and sauté 5 minutes, stirring from time to time, until translucent. Add the garlic, carrots and celery and continue cooking another 8 minutes. Add the harissa, cumin, coriander and caraway seeds and cook for a further 2 minutes, stirring well. Gently mix the chickpeas into the vegetable mixture (you don't want them to break down) along with most of the salt and plenty of black pepper. Add most of the water and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat and simmer gently 10 minutes.
2. Meanwhile, rinse the bulgur, put in a small saucepan, and cover generously with cold water. Bring to a boil and immediately remove from the heat. Drain, refresh under cold water, drain again and set aside.
3. Before serving, add the cooked bulgur to the soup and bring to a gentle simmer. Divide the soup among bowls and serve at once. Top with chopped cilantro and a squeeze of lemon and/or dukka, an Egyptian nut and spice mix.

Enjoy!

Adapted from Heidi Swanson's 101 Cookbooks

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