Cozy Italian Lentil Stew

Ingredients

Veggies

- 1 Medium onion, diced
- 3 Bell pepper, diced small
- 2 Medium potatoes, diced small
- Optional: Celery or carrot (if you want a classic mirepoix)

Seasonings

- 1 Tbsp coriander seeds, ground
- 1 Tbsp fennel seeds, ground
- ¾ Tsp anise seeds, ground
- 1 Tsp white peppercorns, ground
- 2 Bay leaves
- 6 Cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 Lemon, zest and juice
- Pinch dried chili flakes, ground

Stew Base

- 3 Tbsp tomato paste
- 1 Cup French green lentils (rinsed well)
- 1 Can crushed tomatoes (no salt added)
- 4 Cups water (add extra if needed)
- 2 Bay leaves
- 1 Tbsp Vegetable bouillon paste (instead of salt)
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 1 Tsp smoked paprika
- 1 Handful Fresh parsley, chopped
- Salt and black pepper to taste

Toppings

- Baked tofu
    - Bake at 400 for 30 minutes. Season with a pork rub and olive oil.
- Sauteed collard greens or kale
    - Blanche in boiled water for 3 minutes.
    - Strain and hold.
    - Saute with sliced garlic, salt, and oil for a few minutes.
- Feta
- Diced red onion
- Fresh Parsley

Instructions

1. Dice onions, peppers, and potatoes
2. In a mortar and pestle, crush coriander, fennel, anise, white peppercorns, and chili flakes until coarse.
3. Add the sliced garlic and lemon zest. Pound again into a fragrant paste.
4. Heat olive oil over medium-high and add 3 tbsp tomato paste. Cook until it starts to darken and caramelizes. Add the spice paste and fry briefly to bloom the aromatics.
5. Add all diced vegetables to the pot. Stir to coat in the tomato-spice mixture and cook until they soften.
6. Stir in rinsed French green lentils.
7. Add crushed tomatoes, 4 cups water, lemon juice, bay leaves, and potatoes.
8. Bring to a simmer
9. Lower heat to medium-low and simmer until lentils and potatoes are tender.
10. Add more water if it thickens too quickly.
11. Season and finish
12. Taste. Add veggie Boullion.
13. Add smoked paprika, adjust salt and pepper, and finish with fresh parsley.

Notes: Don't forget about the toppings, i show a few combinations but do, make it your own here.

source: https://youtu.be/a3wKB9coGwU?si=FtxwoQ-qM6y9LrRR

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