

Sweet potato and red lentil soup

Adapted from a lighter version of [this soup](#)

<http://gggiraffe.blogspot.com/2014/07/52-diet-vegetarian-meal-plans.html>

Serves 4

325 calories/serving

1 tsp olive oil

1 onion, chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely sliced

1 celery stick, chopped

1 carrot, chopped

1 cup red lentils

2 medium sweet potatoes chopped*

5 cups water

2 tsp/2 cubes stock powder

~2 tsp seasoning such as Ras El Hanout, curry powder, garam masala

salt & pepper

Heat olive oil over medium heat. Fry onion, garlic, celery and carrot until soft. Add remaining ingredients and check seasoning. Cook for 20 to 30 minutes or until potato is soft and lentils cooked. Puree and serve. 129 calories per serving.

**Note: you could bake the sweet potato until soft. It will make the flavour more intense in the soup but it is not necessary if you don't have time.*

How to bake a sweet potato perfectly

Follow the recipe below to perfectly bake a sweet potato, without having to test and guess when it is done. Here are the methods to the madness:

- **Don't coat the sweet potatoes in or wrap them in foil.** This is often required in baked sweet potato recipes, but it is time-consuming and not necessary. I've also found that this helps the skin separate from the sweet potato flesh, making it easier to peel and eat after baking.

- **Prick the sweet potatoes with a fork before baking.** This improves the texture and helps the sweet potato separate from the skin.
- **Don't place the sweet potatoes on a baking sheet – put them directly on the oven rack.** I've found the baking sheet to be unnecessary.
- **Place a sheet of foil or a baking sheet on the bottom rack of your oven (but not directly on the bottom of the oven).** This catches any syrup that may drip from the sweet potatoes. Don't worry, sweet potato juice isn't going to gush out and dirty your oven, there are just a few drips that turn into charcoal on the foil.
- **Leave the sweet potatoes in the oven after turning off the oven.** The residual heat continues to cook the sweet potatoes without burning them, so they get exceptionally tender and moist.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Put baking sheet lined with foil on the lowest rack of your oven. (Don't put the foil directly on the bottom of the oven.) This will catch any of the syrup that may escape from the sweet potatoes. For easy cleanup, simply remove the foil and throw it away after baking the sweet potatoes.
2. Don't preheat the oven. Prick your sweet potatoes each 2-3 time with a fork, then place them directly on the oven rack in the middle of the oven, above the rack with the foil. Turn the oven on to 425.
3. Bake for 45 minutes for sweet potatoes/yams that are 2-3 inches in diameter. For sweet potatoes that are up to 4 inches in diameter, bake for an hour. For super large sweet potatoes, bake for an hour and 15 minutes.
4. After the time has elapsed, don't open the oven but turn it off. Let the sweet potatoes sit in the oven for at least 30 minutes but up to an hour. Remove from the oven and eat immediately or remove the skin and store in a container in the fridge.