

# Greek Lentil Salad

Serves 4-6

*This dish was inspired by the bright, fresh, simplicity of classic Greek Salad. Lentils are an excellent source of fiber and vegetable protein, plus they are amenable to many flavor profiles.*

*This tasty, satisfying version will fill you up while helping keep blood sugar levels steady.*

## Salad

1 ½ cups French, green, or brown lentils  
3 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed  
1 bay leaf  
½ medium red onion, thinly sliced  
1 medium cucumber, peeled [organic if possible – see note below]  
12 cherry tomatoes, halved  
½ cup fresh mint, chopped  
¼ cup crumbled feta cheese  
Optional : chopped romaine, baby spinach or arugula

## Dressing

¼ cup balsamic vinegar  
½ cup extra virgin olive oil  
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard  
½ teaspoon dried oregano  
½ teaspoon maple syrup or honey, to taste  
½ teaspoon sea salt  
¼ teaspoon black pepper

Rinse and drain the lentils. Place them, the smashed garlic, and bay leaf in a medium saucepan. Cover with water by 2 inches and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and gently simmer until lentils are tender but not falling apart, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain well and discard garlic and bay leaf.

Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a jar and shake well

Transfer warm lentils to a large bowl, add the onions, and pour ½ cup of the dressing over. Toss gently to coat. Allow the lentils to cool completely, stirring occasionally. You want them tangy and bright so they may need additional dressing beyond the ½ cup.

When lentils are cool, add the cucumber and tomatoes to the bowl, tossing gently to combine. Check to see if additional dressing or a couple of pinches of salt are needed, then add the mint and feta, tossing to combine. Serve lentils alone or on top of greens of choice.

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## Chef C's Cooking Tips:

- Adding any dressing to lentils while they are still warm helps them absorb flavor.
- Adding the raw onion with the dressing and warm lentils helps tame their pungent personality
- Variation: use chopped scallion in place of red onion, celery instead of cucumber, diced roasted red pepper or sun dried tomatoes for tomatoes, parsley for mint, and goat cheese for feta. Top with ¼ cup toasted walnuts.
- Cucumber with skin adds extra nutrients and fiber to a dish but they are consistently on Environmental Working Group's dirty dozen list for high pesticide residue. If organic and/or un-waxed product isn't available, I recommend lightly peeling the cucumber before using.