



Subtly-Spiced Potato and Onion Soup

(makes 4 servings)

This ticks all the boxes if you are looking for a heart-warming soup with a bit of a kick! The paste keeps well for a few days, covered in the fridge and is great with pasta, rice or added to salad dressings. If time is really tight, you can also use a ready-made harissa-style mix available in jars.

Ingredients

For the spice paste:

- ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ½ teaspoon caraway seeds,
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika powder
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled
- 4 red chillies, de-seeded and roughly chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh coriander leaves
- 2-4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

For the soup:

- 2 tablespoons light olive oil
- 2 onions, peeled and chopped/sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 3 large, floury potatoes, peeled and diced
- 500ml chicken or vegetable stock

Method

Place the cumin and caraway seeds in a dry frying pan and toss over a medium heat for around half a minute or so to release the aromas (don't let them burn) before putting them in a herb/spice grinder along with the sea salt, paprika, chillies and coriander and blitz until everything is evenly chopped.

Add 2-3 tablespoons of the the extra virgin olive oil and continue to whizz until you have a wet but not runny paste consistency - add another tablespoon if required then leave aside. You can also do all the above in a pestle and mortar but it's a little harder work!

To make the soup, warm the light olive oil in a soup pot, add the onions, garlic and salt, stir well, cover and simmer over a very low heat for 15-20 minutes or until the onions are pale and soft. Check every 5 minutes and stir - they shouldn't brown.

Add the potatoes and 400ml of the stock, stir well, bring just to the boil then turn the heat back down to very low, cover and simmer for another 20-30 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked right through.

Add the remainder of the stock plus a little boiling water to bring the soup to your desired consistency, mash it up a little with a potato masher if you like a more 'mushy' soup. Season to taste and continue to simmer until the soup is piping hot.

To serve, add a generous teaspoon of the spicy paste and stir it through well (if you 'like it hot', add more!)