

Lentil Soup with Spiced Soda Bread

250g wholemeal flour
250g strong white bread flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon fine salt
1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1 tablespoon panch phoran
400ml buttermilk

For the lentils

150g red split lentils
1 bay leaf
1 dried red chilli
½ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon fine salt
75g butter
5 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
Handful fresh coriander, roughly chopped

Pre-heat the oven to 200C and line a baking tray with baking paper. For the soda bread, put the flours, salt, bicarbonate of soda and five-spice into a large bowl and mix well. Make a well in the centre and add a little over half the buttermilk. Bring the dough together by hand, adding more of the buttermilk if needed (you may not need any more). As soon as all the flour is absorbed and the dough comes together, lightly flour the work surface, tip the dough onto it and roll into a neat ball. Place on the baking tray. Using a sharp knife, make a cut down the centre vertically and then the same horizontally to form a cross, cutting all the way down to the base. Bake on the middle shelf for 30 minutes, until the bread is golden and sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Put on a wire rack to cool.

While the bread is baking, wash the lentils, rinsing them till the water runs clear. Put the lentils into a pan with 1 litre of cold water, the bay leaf, red chilli, turmeric and salt. Bring to the boil and leave to simmer for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes the mixture should be thicker and the lentils will have broken up. Melt the butter in a small frying pan over a medium heat. Add the sliced garlic and fry until golden-brown. Pour the garlic and butter into the lentils and mix through. Now add the chopped coriander and take the pan off the heat. Serve the warm lentils with chunks of soda bread.

