

Spicy North African Vegetable Soup with Chickpeas

Yield: 6 to 8 servings

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- 2 quarts water
- 2 cups cooked chickpeas
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 6 cloves garlic, thickly sliced
- 1/2 teaspoon chili pepper flakes
- 1 cup coarsely chopped onions
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped carrots
- 2 1/2 cups coarsely chopped unpeeled sweet potatoes
- 2 cups bite-sized cauliflower florets
- 1 teaspoon turmeric
- 3 cups coarsely chopped mustard greens
- 2 tablespoons dried sacred basil or other basil variety
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, or to taste

There are dozens of different basil varieties from which to choose. The delicate sweet-flavored “sacred basil” called for in this soup is commonly used in the cuisines of Africa, India, and the Far East. Although sacred basil is recommended in this recipe, you can use any basil variety.

- 1.** Bring the water, chickpeas, and cinnamon stick to boil in a 6-quart stockpot. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer 10 to 15 minutes, or until the cinnamon stick uncurls.
- 2.** While the chickpeas simmer, heat the oil in a medium-sized skillet over medium heat. Add the garlic, chili flakes, onions, and carrots, and sauté, stirring occasionally for 5 minutes, or until the onions begin to soften.
- 3.** When the cinnamon stick uncurls, transfer the sautéed vegetables to the stockpot along with the sweet potatoes, cauliflower, and turmeric. Simmer covered for 20 minutes, or until the sweet potatoes and cauliflower are tender.
- 4.** Add the mustard greens and continue to simmer 2 to 3 minutes, or until bright green. Stir in the basil and salt. Adjust the seasonings, if desired.
- 5.** Ladle the hot soup into bowls and serve.