

## SPICY RED LENTIL SOUP *ZUPPA DI LENTICCHIE ROSSE*

Lentils are really popular in Italy, particularly the green varieties, but red lentils are also widespread in northern Italy, and make an appearance on most restaurant menus. This hearty soup, with carrots and a hint of chilli, is a real winner. If you prefer, you can use parsley instead of chives. Serve with my Cheesy ciabatta (see page 62).

1 Heat the oil in a medium saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and carrots and season with salt. Fry for 5–10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

2 Increase the heat. Add the stock, lentils and chilli powder and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15–20 minutes or until the lentils and carrots are tender.

3 Remove the pan from the heat. Transfer 3 ladlefuls of soup into a jug and blitz until smooth using a hand-held blender. Pour the soup back into the pan and stir.

4 Ladle the soup into warm bowls and sprinkle over the chives. Serve immediately.

Serves 4

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
1 red onion, peeled and finely chopped  
2 large carrots, peeled and cut into 5mm cubes  
1.2 litres hot vegetable stock  
100g dried red lentils, rinsed and drained  
½ teaspoon chilli powder  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh chives  
Salt

