

Lentil-Walnut Pâté

This is a recipe adapted from one given to me by my friend Judy Kaestner, a professional chef. Upon tasting it, people are always surprised at its remarkable likeness to liver pâté. It's a perfect way to start a dinner party.

Serve a small bowl of Dijon mustard alongside the pâté. Spread a little Dijon on a cracker or bread and then a healthy serving of pâté.

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup green lentils, sorted, rinsed well, and drained
- 2 tablespoons canola or corn oil
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 2 teaspoons sea salt, plus more to taste
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons dried basil, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon dried thyme, crumbled
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano, crumbled
- 2 cups walnuts, toasted (see page 6)
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- Freshly milled black pepper

1. Place 2 cups cold water and the lentils in a small saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer until tender, 30 to 40 minutes. It's OK if the lentils are a bit mushy. Do not drain. Set aside.
2. Heat the oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add the onion and salt and sauté, stirring occasionally, until the onion begins to soften, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic and herbs and sauté until the onion is translucent, 3 to 5 minutes more. Set aside to cool.
3. Place the walnuts in a food processor and process until well ground. Add the lentils and their cooking liquid, the onion mixture, mustard, and salt. Puree, scraping down the sides, until a smooth paste forms, 3 to 5 minutes. Season with pepper and additional salt, if desired, and serve.