Slow-Cooker Mulligatawny Soup

Makes 6 Servings

This soup is the result of British colonizers encounters with rasam, a souplike dish from Tamil Nadu, a region in southern India, thats often made with lentils "Milagu tannir," or pepper water, evolved into mulligatawny when the British made it thick, chunky and meaty In her book "From Curries to Kabobs," the author Madhur Jaffrey wrote that mulligatawny was "an essential part of my childhood," as she ate it at the homes of Anglo-Indian friends and in hotels on vacation
Author: Sarah DiGregorio, NY Times



2 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves, smashed and chopped
1 1/4 cups chopped onions
2 carrots, peeled and sliced
2 celery stalks, sliced
1 large apple, preferably Granny Smith, peeled, cored and chopped
1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs, cut into bite-size chunks
1 cup red lentils rinsed
2 tablespoons tomato paste
2 tablespoons minced ginger (from about 2 inches of peeled ginger)
2 teaspoons black or brown mustard seeds
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon curry powder
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (use a bit less)
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon coarse kosher salt, plus more to taste
3 cups low-sodium chicken broth or stock
15 ounces full fat coconut milk
Juice of 1 lime (about 1 1/2 tablespoons)
GARNISH: yogurt and chopped cilantro

NOTE: you may also add about 2 cups of chopped fresh cauliflower during the last 45 minutes of cooking (would not be authentic, but it's a way to add more veggies without changing the flavor).
1. Combine all the ingredients except the coconut milk, lime juice and the garnishes in a 6- to 8-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on low for 4 hours. If using an Instant Pot use the manual saute function to heat the soup ingredients before switching it to the slow cooker function.
2. Stir in the coconut milk and lime juice. Taste and add more salt if necessary. It may be hot enough; if not, continue cooking another 20-30 minutes (lid on). If you're using an Instant Pot just switch it to Manual|Saute to heat it up. Serve in bowls topped with a dusting of cayenne, if desired. If you like garam masala, add a sprinkling of that on top instead of cayenne. Garnish with a jot of yogurt (or sour cream if that's all you have on hand) and chopped cilantro.
Adapted from the New York Times, Sarah DiGregorio