

Warm Lentil Salad From World Food: Paris, by James Oseland

Serves 4-6 | 15 minutes prep + 30 minutes cook time

James Oseland's life in food extends around the world, from a childhood fascination with Julia Child on television to a fellow film student's invitation to Jakarta that triggered his love of Southeast Asian cooking. Those early experiences shaped his work as the editor-in-chief at *Saveur* for nine years, which he once wrote wasn't a food magazine, but a publication that celebrated the human experience through food.

These days Oseland is satisfying his deep curiosity about the way we eat with a series of cookbooks with Ten Speed Press inspired by the iconic Time-Life Food of the World series from the '60s and '70s. The first volume, *World Food: Mexico City*, takes us into Chilango homes and neighborhood markets. In the most recent, *World Food: Paris*, Oseland gives us insights into how Parisians eat and offers recipes for classic bistro favorites, both simple and complex.

This is *World Food: Paris*' warm lentil salad, typically part of the *apéro* (short for *apéritif*, the drinks and food served before dinner) but as Oseland notes, "it is equally good as a first course, a side dish, a picnic food, or even an easy light meal with good bread."

**1½ cups French green lentils,
rinsed**

**5 ounces slab bacon, cut
into lardons 2 inches long
and ¼ inch wide and thick
(about 1 cup)**

**2 fresh or dried thyme sprigs,
or a generous pinch dried
thyme leaves***

2 bay leaves

**½ teaspoon fine sea salt + more
to taste**

**½ cup walnut or grapeseed
oil****

1 tablespoon red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

**Freshly ground black pepper
to taste**

4 large pieces leaf lettuce

**½ cup minced fresh flat-leaf
parsley**

**About 5 small shallots,
halved lengthwise then sliced
crosswise ¼ inch thick (about
½ cup)**

Step 1 In a medium saucepan, combine the lentils, bacon, thyme, bay leaves, ½ teaspoon salt, and water to cover by 1 to 2 inches. Bring to a boil over high heat, turn down the heat to medium-low, and simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until the lentils are just tender, 30 to 45 minutes; the timing depends on the lentil variety used. Take care to add water if the lentils begin to dry out.

Step 2 Just before the lentils are ready, make the vinaigrette and dress the lettuce. In a bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, mustard, a good pinch of salt, and a few grinds of pepper. In another bowl, lightly dress the lettuce with a few teaspoons of the vinaigrette and set aside. Reserve the remaining vinaigrette for dressing the lentils.

Step 3 Drain the lentils and remove and discard the thyme sprigs and bay leaves. Transfer to a serving bowl and stir in the parsley, shallots, and a few grinds of pepper. Add the reserved vinaigrette and stir to mix well. Taste and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper if needed. Divide the still warm lentils among four plates and put a piece of dressed lettuce along- side each serving. Serve immediately

*the Chloe and Daphne dried thyme flowers are perfect for this salad

**of course we make this with extra virgin olive oil