

Bewitching Squash Soup

Ingredients

- 1 small pumpkin (1 ½ pound)
- 1 small butternut squash (1 ½ - 2 lbs)
- olive oil
- 2 large pinches ground cinnamon
- 1 large pinch ground allspice
- ¾ cup chopped onion
- ½ cup chopped carrot
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- 1 tablespoon minced ginger
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic
- 4 cups chicken stock (add more or less as needed)
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- 1 hot pepper
- salt
- black pepper

Garnishes

- pumpkin seeds
- prosciutto in small cubes (comes in packages)
- sage leaves
- olive oil
- butter

Bowl

- 2 small pumpkins
- salt
- black pepper

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Halve and remove seeds from butternut squash and pumpkin. Season with salt and pepper.

Place squash and pumpkin cut side up on a parchment lined baking sheet, cut side down, and drizzle with olive oil. Place in the oven and roast until the skin is golden brown and the pumpkin is tender, 50 to 60 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to

cool. Once cool enough to handle, use a spoon to scoop the pumpkin flesh from its skin and set pumpkin aside until ready to use. Discard the skin.

For the bowl, cut top off pumpkin, remove seeds. Season inside with salt and pepper, replace top, place in baking dish and bake for 30 – 40 minutes until flesh can be pierced. You want the flesh tender but still want the pumpkin firm.

Set a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 2 – 3 turns of olive oil and, when hot, add the cinnamon and allspice and cook, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Add the onions, carrots, celery, ginger and garlic to the pan and saute, stirring occasionally, until lightly caramelized, 3 to 4 minutes. Add the chicken stock, hot pepper and reserved pumpkin to the pan and bring the stock to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook the soup for 15 to 20 minutes, or until the vegetables are soft.

Remove the soup from the heat, remove hot pepper, allow to cool, then process with an immersion blender until smooth. Alternatively puree in batches in a blender. It is important to remove liquid from heat for at least 5 minutes before blending. If using a blender, release one corner of the lid to avoid the vacuum effect that causes explosions. Place towel over lid and pulse a few times then process on high speed until smooth.

Add the cream to the soup and stir to combine. Season with salt and pepper.

Garnishes:

Heat pan over high heat. Add dried raw pumpkin seeds, stir and/or toss until toasted. Seeds will “puff” out when toasted. Remove seeds from pan.

In the same pan, lower heat a little and add a little olive oil. Add prosciutto and cook until browned, stirring. When crisp, remove from pan and drain on paper towel.

In same pan, add pat of butter. When butter turns brown add sage leaves and cook until crisp, about a minute, turning over leaves while cooking.

To serve:

Reheat soup if it has cooled too much.

Fill cooked pumpkins with soup and garnish with toasted pumpkin seeds, fried prosciutto and 2 – 3 fried sage leaves.

This recipe makes more soup than for 2 but can be frozen and served at a future date.