

ROASTED BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

I've never been a huge squash fan, but every now and then I try to get out of my comfort zone. I really like to cook with local produce and this time of year, there are tons of big squash available in my greenmarket, so I figured, why not? I was surprised at how well this soup came out. For all of you who also aren't into squash, this dish may change your mind.

INGREDIENTS (Serves 2-4)

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut in half horizontally

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 large vidalia onion, rough chop

1 teaspoon kosher salt

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 quart homemade turkey or chicken bone broth

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup maple syrup (optional)

Fresh ground pepper

Rosemary sprig for garnish

Croutons for garnish

Parmesan (small grate) for garnish

Cubed cooked turkey, chicken or ham for garnish (optional)

Toasted pumpkin seeds for garnish (optional)

Heavy cream for garnish (optional)

PREPARATION

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place the squash halves on a greased sheet pan. Season with salt and pepper. Brush with olive oil. Place in oven until soft, about 45 minutes. Once you can easily prick with a fork, remove from oven and allow to cool. Once cool, scoop out all of the squash and discard the skin.

Heat the remaining oil in a large dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Add the onion and season with salt and pepper until translucent, about 6 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook through for 1 minute. Add the squash, broth and water. Bring to boil and then lower the heat to a simmer for about 15 minutes.

Allow to cool for ten minutes. Use an immersion blender or regular blender, blend until smooth. *(If using a regular blender, you may need to blend the soup in batches to avoid a mess.)*

Taste and re-season with salt and pepper if necessary. If there's a bitter taste or if you like a touch of sweetness, add in the syrup and blend until incorporated.

There are lots of options for garnishing. Mix and match as you like. One way is to ladle the soup into large mugs. Place a crouton on top. Place optional meat cubes on top of crouton. Sprinkle with parmesan. Garnish with rosemary. Or, you could add a drizzle of heavy cream and run a toothpick through it for a nice pattern and garnish with some toasted pumpkin seeds and chopped parsley.