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Buttercup Squash Soup

NATURALLY DELICIOUS RECIPES • Janice Feuer-Haugen

~ Fall Gold ~

Whether round, scalloped, turbaned or pear-shaped, winter squash have abundant nutrients, few calories and a hard skin. In general, winter squash are great sources of vitamins A and C, potassium, dietary fiber and manganese. They are all naturally high in anti-oxidants, and good sources of omega-3 fatty acids and four of the B vitamins. Because of their hard skin they have a long life off the vine, so we can enjoy these golden-hued, nutrient-rich winter squash from now until spring.

My Favorite Four

Among the assortment of winter squash, my favorites include kabocha, buttercup, red kuri and butternut. With any one of these deeply-colored and mildly-sweet squash in your pantry, a pot of comforting, luscious and dairy-free soup is easy to prepare. Know that you can use any of these winter squash interchangeably in the following recipe for Roasted Buttercup Squash Soup.

All four of my favorites can be found at local farmers' markets now, and in many supermarkets through November. Butternut squash, the most readily available of the four, often graces supermarket produce shelves all the way through spring. As butternut squash varies so much in both its sweetness and richness of color, it's worth searching out the other varieties first.

Buttercup squash are usually so small and dainty that I just cut them into wedges and remove the seeds. I'll sprinkle the wedges with coarse salt and roast them in a 400 degree oven for 25–30 minutes until tender. Though I changed my plans recently when I found two large (4 ½ pounds each) and sweet buttercup squash from my favorite local farmers. I knew that these buttercup squash



were destined for the soup pot.

Cutting Winter Squash

The most difficult part of working with winter squash is cutting through their thick skin. More than once I've gotten a knife stuck in a large kabocha squash. Fortunately my husband has been there to come to the rescue. With roasted Buttercup Squash Soup you only need to make one cut to divide the squash in half before roasting. After roasting, dicing the soft flesh is a cinch.

To cut a squash, put it on a cutting board with its flattest side down. Place a large, firm knife or cleaver on the squash. Then with a hammer or mallet, pound the knife where the blade joins the handle. Continue pounding until, voilà, your squash splits in half. Remove the seeds and roast the halves or cut the squash according to your recipe.

Strike It Rich

For the cooler days of fall, soup makes the perfect meal. It not only fills our kitchen with wonderful smells, it comforts and nurtures us body, mind and spirit. Enjoy a steaming bowl of velvet-textured Roasted Buttercup Squash Soup and you'll know you've struck it rich with fall gold.

Recipe on next page...



Roasted Buttercup Squash Soup

*Lusciously rich & smooth
with chunks of sweet squash.
Vegan, gluten-free & dairy-free.*

Makes 12 cups

Active time: 30 minutes

Total time: 1 hour

- 4 ½–5 pounds buttercup squash
(or red kuri, kabocha or butternut)
- 7 ½ cups Easy & Basic Vegetable Stock
(recipe below), divided
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4 cups leeks, sliced into 1/8th inch rounds
or 1 large onion cut into ½-inch chunks
- 3 four-inch sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 four-inch sprig fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons salt if using unsalted vegetable stock
- Dozen twists freshly ground pepper
- 1 cup blanched, slivered almonds

Garnish

- Thinly-sliced chives or scallions
- Fresh thyme leaves

1. Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Wash the buttercup squash. Cut it in half and remove the seeds. Place it cut side down on parchment paper on a baking pan. Bake the squash 30-45 minutes till just tender.
2. While the squash is cooking prepare the Easy & Basic Vegetable Stock (recipe below) or use prepared stock.
3. When the squash is done roasting, put it aside to cool. When cool enough to handle, peel and dice

3 cups of it and set aside. Peel and roughly chop the remaining squash. You should have about 5½-6 cups of roughly chopped squash.

4. For the soup, pour the oil into a large soup pot over medium heat. When hot, stir in the sliced leeks or onion. Cover the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes until just beginning to color. Stir in the fresh thyme and rosemary and cook another minute.
5. Add the 5 ½-6 cups of roughly chopped squash to the pot. Stir in 5 cups of vegetable stock and the salt (if the stock is unsalted) and the pepper. Cover the pan and simmer the soup for 10 minutes.
6. Prepare the almond milk in a blender: Blend together the slivered almonds and 2 cups of vegetable stock for 4 minutes until smooth.
7. Remove the herb stalks from the soup, leaving behind the leaves. Purée the soup in batches in a blender and return it to the pot. Stir in the almond milk and the reserved 3 cups of diced squash. Cook the soup at a simmer for 5 minutes. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste. Add additional stock if the soup is too thick. Adjust the salt and pepper to taste.
8. Serve garnished with fresh chives or scallions and thyme leaves.

Easy & Basic Vegetable Stock

Have your stock simmering on the stove while you roast the squash and prepare the other soup ingredients.

Makes about 8 cups

Dark green ends from the leeks OR 1 onion cut into 1" chunks

- 2 carrots cut into ½-inch rounds
- 2 stalks celery, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 large clove, quartered
- 2 large bay leaves
- 2 large sprigs fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dried
- 6 peppercorns
- 12 cups water

Put everything into a large soup pot. Bring the water to a boil and reduce the heat so the stock simmers, partially covered, for 45 minutes to 1 hour. Strain the stock through a fine strainer. ■

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