

October 14, 2015

Squash Time

Produce bins filled with colourful squash of all shapes and sizes is a sure sign of fall. However, many people find squash intimidating – they are big and bulky, and many are not easy to peel. Here are some simple recipes to help you get squash on your dinner table.

Spaghetti squash is so called because when cooked, the flesh comes out in strands, like spaghetti. Spaghetti squash can be simply enjoyed with a little bit of butter and brown sugar, but it has become a popular alternative for traditional pasta. Our Swiss Mushroom Spaghetti Squash dresses the cooked squash in a simple yet decadent bacon and mushroom sauce.

Butternut squash is the most popular squash out there. In our Squash and Bean Chili, it lends its earthy sweetness to a hearty vegetarian chili. Like spice? Up the red pepper flakes, or add cayenne or chopped jalapeno.

Our Maple Pecan Squash is a simple side dish that can be made with any winter squash. Try using kabocha or buttercup squash, which have thin skins that do not require peeling.

SWISS MUSHROOM SPAGHETTI SQUASH

Ingredients:

1 spaghetti squash
4 slices bacon
1/2 lb (250 g) mushrooms, sliced
1/4 tsp (1 mL) nutmeg
2 cups (500 mL) shredded Swiss cheese
Sliced green onion

Method:

Pierce skin of squash with fork in several places. Place on a pan; bake at 350°F (180°C) for about 1 hour or until tender. Cut squash in half lengthwise; remove seeds and discard. Using a fork, pull squash strands free from shell; set squash and shell aside. In a frypan, cook bacon until crisp; drain off all but 1 tbsp (15 mL) of drippings. Crumble bacon and set aside. Add mushrooms to frypan and saute for about 3 minutes. Combine mushrooms with squash, bacon, nutmeg and cheese. Return mixture to squash shell. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for about 15 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with onion. *Serves 8.*

Cook's Note: For guidance on how to cut a butternut squash, visit our YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/TheBlueFlameKitchen.

SQUASH AND BEAN CHILI

Ingredients:

1 tbsp (15 mL) oil
2 cups (500 mL) chopped onions
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
3 tbsp (40 mL) chili powder
1 tsp (5 mL) cumin
1 tsp (5 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) red pepper flakes
1 can (28 oz/796 mL) diced tomatoes
1 1/2 cups (375 mL) canned vegetable or chicken broth
2 cups (500 mL) cubed peeled butternut squash
1 cup (250 mL) diced green bell pepper
1 cup (250 mL) red bell pepper
3 cans (19 oz/540 mL each) mixed beans, rinsed and drained
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh cilantro

Method:

Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium heat. Add onions and garlic; cook for 5 minutes. Stir in chili powder, cumin, salt and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring, for 1 - 2 minutes. Add next 6 ingredients (tomatoes through beans). Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes or until



vegetables are tender. Chili may be prepared to this point and refrigerated for up to 24 hours. Return chili to Dutch oven and heat to serving temperature. Stir in cilantro just before serving. *Serves 4 - 6.*

Cook's Note: Rice or cornbread makes a nice accompaniment to this chili.

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MAPLE PECAN SQUASH

Ingredients:

6 cups (1.5 L) shredded winter squash
1/3 cup (75 mL) maple syrup
1/2 tsp (2 mL) salt
1/4 tsp (1 mL) pepper
1/4 cup (50 mL) whole wheat bread crumbs
2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped pecans

Method:

Combine squash, syrup, salt and pepper. Spoon into a greased 8 inch (20 cm) square baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and pecans. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 50 - 60 minutes. *Serves 6.*