



Butternut Squash Soup

Yields: 4 to 6 1.5 cup servings

Prepare the butternut squash by cutting it in half lengthwise and scraping away the seeds and stringy, tough flesh from the center. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and lay the halves flesh-side-down on the paper. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes, or until the texture is soft under gentle pressure. The skin beginning to shrivel slightly and the juices starting to caramelize around the edges are signs that it's done. Remove the pan from the oven and let it cool.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large butternut squash, about 3lbs
- 1 medium shallot, peeled & minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon madras curry powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 4-6 cups chicken stock
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/3 cup heavy cream

Use a spoon to scrape the cooled flesh out of the shells and into a large (8-quart or bigger) sauce pan. Set this aside. In a small skillet, warm the olive oil. Add the shallots and sautee them with a pinch of salt until they are soft and begin to brown slightly. Add the remaining salt, curry powder, pepper, and nutmeg. Mix and continue cooking for about a minute more when the combination becomes fragrant.

Add this mixture to the squash. Add about 4 cups of the chicken stock to the sauce pan. Using an immersion blender, puree the squash until the texture is smooth and free of any chunks. Add additional stock, as needed. Alternatively, the shallot & squash mixture can be pureed in a food processor in small batches.

Heat the mixture over a medium flame until it reaches a very gentle and slow boil. Add the maple syrup and cider vinegar, mix, and cook for another 1-2 minutes. Next, add the cream, stir, and cook for five minutes longer. Remove from the stove and serve immediately topped with a little grated parmesan or a drizzle of maple syrup.