

Indian Spiced Squash Soup

When it's cold and grey outside, there's nothing better than soup. Specifically richly spiced, creamy soup like this healthy squash version.

I've eaten and made plenty of squash soups. Most are fairly simple and use canned pumpkin with winter spices like cinnamon and nutmeg. These are good, don't get me wrong, but sometimes you want something more.

That's where this recipe comes in. It starts with roasting squash in avocado oil and spices, and ends with fresh chili peppers, more spices, coconut milk, and some flavorful garnishes. It's perfect for a dinner party starter, or makes a delicious vegetarian meal when you add some bread or even brown rice.

Now, I love squash, but I rarely buy a whole one and cut it up. Too much trouble. My grocery store gives me two options. The produce department usually has cubed chunks of squash ready to use, which is what I prefer. But even a bag of frozen, cubed squash is a decent alternative to hacking into a heavy winter squash, at least for me.

As for type, well, that's really up to you. Butternut is an easy, widely available option, and acorn is probably next on the list. Pumpkins work well, although you want to make sure you get a small one.

Once you've roasted your squash, the rest is pretty easy. Just sauté up some veggies with spices, add some stock and blend. Top with your desired garnishes, and you've got a delicious fall soup ready to go. I think this soup would be delicious with some crabmeat or shrimp to make it a bit more filling. As is, this soup also hits all the right dietary angles: It's gluten-free, Paleo, dairy-free, and easily made vegan (just use vegetable broth.)

Ingredients:

Roasted Squash:

- 1 butternut, pumpkin, or acorn squash, peeled, seeded, and cut into cubes (or about 4 cups pre-cubed)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin avocado oil
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1/2 teaspoon sea salt

Soup:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin avocado oil
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 Thai chili or small jalapeno, seeded and minced

2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon grated ginger
2 tablespoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon garam masala
1 teaspoon chili powder
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 cups chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup full-fat coconut milk
Juice of 1 lime
Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

To Serve:

Chopped fresh cilantro
Coconut flakes
Diced peppers
Lime wedges
Pumpkin seeds

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Toss the squash with the oil and spices and spread in an even layer on the baking sheet. Roast for 20-25 minutes, until squash is tender and lightly browned. Remove from oven.

For the soup, heat the oil in a Dutch oven or large saucepan over medium high heat. Add the onion, chili, garlic, and ginger to the pot and cook until softened, 5 minutes or so. Add the seasonings and cook for 2 more minutes.

Add the roasted squash, stir to coat with the seasonings, and add in the stock. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes. Transfer to a blender and blend until smooth.

Transfer the soup back to the pot and add the coconut milk and lime juice. Simmer until heated through and season to taste.

Serve the soup topped with the desired garnishes.