

Classic Roasted Butternut Squash Soup

This recipe yields a velvety, comforting soup with a perfect balance of sweet and savory flavors. It's a fantastic dish for a cool day.

- **Yields:** 6-8 servings
- **Prep time:** 20 minutes
- **Cook time:** 1 hour

Ingredients

For the Soup

- 1 large butternut squash (about 3-4 lbs or 1.5 kg), halved lengthwise and seeds removed
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped (optional, for added sweetness)
- 2 celery stalks, chopped (optional, for savory depth)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups (1.4 L) vegetable or chicken broth
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme leaves (or 21 teaspoon dried thyme)
- 21 teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 1 cup (240 ml) heavy cream (or full-fat coconut milk for a dairy-free version)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 tablespoon butter or olive oil for sautéing

For Garnish

- Crumbled feta or goat cheese
- Crispy, crumbled bacon
- Freshly chopped chives
- A swirl of cream
- Toasted pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- Crusty bread for serving

Instructions

1. Roast the Squash

- Preheat your oven to 400°F (200°C).
- Brush the cut sides of the butternut squash with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and season generously with salt and pepper.
- Place the squash halves cut-side down on a baking sheet.
- Roast for 40-50 minutes, or until the flesh is very tender and easily pierced with a fork. Let it cool slightly once removed from the oven.

2. Sauté the Aromatics

- While the squash is roasting, melt the butter or heat the remaining tablespoon of olive oil in a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat.
- Add the chopped onion, carrots, and celery (if using). Sauté for 8-10 minutes, until softened and the onion is translucent.
- Add the minced garlic and fresh thyme, and cook for another minute until fragrant.

3. Combine and Simmer

- Once the roasted squash is cool enough to handle, use a large spoon to scoop the flesh out of the skin and add it directly to the pot with the sautéed vegetables.
- Pour in the broth and add the grated nutmeg. Stir everything together.
- Bring the soup to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover, and let it simmer for at least 15-20 minutes to allow the flavors to meld together.

4. Blend the Soup

- For the smoothest texture, carefully transfer the soup in batches to a high-powered blender and blend until completely smooth. Important: Be sure to remove the small cap from the blender lid and cover the opening with a folded kitchen towel to allow steam to escape safely.
- Alternatively, use an immersion (stick) blender directly in the pot and blend until you reach a creamy consistency.

5. Finish and Season

- Return the blended soup to the pot over low heat.
- Stir in the heavy cream or coconut milk. Heat gently, but do not let it boil.
- Taste the soup and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.

6. Serve

- Ladle the hot soup into bowls.
- Garnish generously with crumbled bacon, feta cheese, and chopped chives, just like in the photo.
- Serve immediately with warm, crusty bread on the side for dipping.

Tips for Success

- **Flavor Boost:** For an even deeper flavor, add a peeled and chopped apple (like a Granny Smith) to the pot along with the onions. Its tartness beautifully balances the sweetness of the squash.
- **Make it Vegan:** Use olive oil instead of butter, vegetable broth, and full-fat coconut milk in place of heavy cream.
- **Storage:** The soup can be stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 5 days. It also freezes exceptionally well for up to 3 months (it's best to freeze it before adding the cream). Reheat gently on the stovetop.