

Roasted Acorn Squash Stuffed with White Corn Polenta *By Chef Pete Cervoni*

Serves 8

Ingredients:

Roasted Acorn Squash:

- Acorn Squash, medium-sized 4 each
- Olive Oil 3 Tablespoons
- Nutmeg, freshly grated 2 Tablespoons
- Fresh Thyme, minced 1 Tablespoon
- Onion Powder 1 Tablespoon
- Smoked Paprika 2 teaspoons
- Celtic Sea Salt 1 teaspoon
- Black Pepper, freshly cracked 2 teaspoons

White Corn Polenta

- White Cornmeal or Grits 2 Cups
- Vegetable Stock 4 Cups
- Shallots, minced 1/2 Cup
- Garlic, minced 1 Tablespoon
- Celtic Sea Salt 1 1/2 teaspoons
- Black Pepper, freshly cracked 1/2 teaspoon
- Baby Spinach 2 Cups
- Plant-Based Butter 2 Tablespoons

Pine Nut-Sage “Gremolata”

- Pine Nuts 1 Cup
- Plant-Based Parmesan Cheese 1/2 Cup
- Fresh Sage, minced 2 Tablespoons
- Fresh Italian Parsley, minced 3 Tablespoons
- Lemon Zest 1 1/2 Tablespoons
- Celtic Sea Salt 1/2 teaspoon

- Black Pepper, freshly cracked 1 teaspoon

METHOD:

It's best to view this dish as three distinct recipes: roasting the Acorn Squash, making the White Corn Polenta and assembling the Gremolata or topping. And then combining them all in a fourth and final step.

Step One: Roasted Acorn Squash

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Split each Acorn Squash in half lengthwise, from tip to stem end, and scoop out the seeds and pulp. Doing this will create the chamber for the polenta. Trim the outside of each half to ensure that it will sit evenly once flipped over.
3. Create “spice rub” by combining the Nutmeg, Onion Powder, Smoked Paprika, Thyme, Sea Salt and Black Pepper and mix well.
4. Rub olive oil on the cut side of the Squash and inside the empty chamber. Season the inside of each chamber with a healthy pinch of the “spice rub”, ensuring it's evenly distributed.
5. Place the Squash, cut side down, on a parchment-lined sheet pan and roast at 400°F for 20 minutes until the Squash is tender, but still firm.

Step Two: White Corn Polenta

1. While the Acorn Squash is roasting, you can prepare the polenta. In a heavy bottomed pot, bring 4 Cups Vegetable Stock along with Minced Shallot and Garlic, Celtic Sea Salt and Black Pepper to a simmer.
2. Slowly add 2 Cups of White Cornmeal to the water and cook over low heat, stirring constantly for 15 to 20 minutes until fully cooked. The final product should be thick and creamy.
3. Fold in the Baby Spinach and Plant-Based Butter.

4. Turn heat off, cover pot with lid and reserve warm.

Step Three: Pine Nut-Sage “Gremolata”

1. Place raw Pine Nuts and Plant-Based Parmesan Cheese in a food processor and pulse lightly until a coarse meal is formed
2. Add Minced Sage, Lemon Zest, Celtic Sea Salt and Black Pepper. Reserve until ready.

Step Four: Assembly

1. Lower oven temperature to 300°F. 2. Remove Acorn Squash from oven and carefully turn them over onto the sheet pan so chamber is facing up.
2. Fill each chamber with Polenta-Spinach Mixture and top with Pine Nut-Sage Gremolata. Using light pressure, press the topping into the Polenta which should still be warm and soft.
3. Return the assembled Squash to the oven and bake at 300° F for another 15 minutes, or until the Gremolata begins to brown. Serve Hot.
4. Enjoy in JOY!



Fran’s Spiced Pumpkin Muffins!

Spiced Pumpkin Muffins *by Chef Fran Costigan*

True, my Thanksgiving bakes include a perfect vegan Chocolate Cake and Pumpkin Pie, but my family and friends expect these Pumpkin Muffins every year, whether the morning of, the morning after and most definitely on the Thanksgiving table.

Game Plan

1. Position the oven rack to the top third and preheat to 400F
2. Make and cool the puree
3. Clabber the plant milk- at least 10 minutes but longer is fine
4. Make ahead and freeze. Defrost, brush with maple and sprinkle with pumpkin seeds.

Note:

The Spiced Pumpkin Puree: Cooking the spices and sweetener into the pumpkin puree adds a few extra minutes to the recipe, but the result is so worth it. The recipe makes more than you will need for the muffins, so go ahead and stir the rest into oatmeal, blend some into smoothies, or freeze it. Use the amount specified in the recipe, then cook the rest a bit longer until further thickened to make a luscious and thrifty Pumpkin Butter. Actually, I double and triple the recipe in order to do this.

If you use homemade pumpkin puree, you will need to drain it.

Spice to taste but don't overdo. Too much of these warming spices will make the spiced pumpkin bitter.

Spiced Pumpkin Puree

- 15 ounces unsweetened canned pumpkin purée, see notes.
- 1/3 cup vegan cane sugar
- 1/3 cup whole cane sugar or coconut sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves

Batter

- 4 teaspoons apple cider vinegar, divided
 - 2/3 cup soy, oat or almond milk
 - 1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
 - 1 cup all-purpose flour
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon baking soda
 - 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt
 - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
 - 1/4 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
 - 1 cup + 1 tablespoon cooled Spiced Pumpkin Purée
 - 1/4 cup any liquid neutral-flavored vegetable oil, ie: grapeseed, sunflower, safflower
 - 1/4 cup pure maple syrup, Grade A dark
 - 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
 - 1/3 cup dried cranberries
 - 1/3 cup roasted and cooled roughly chopped pecans
 - (optional) Toasted pumpkin seeds for garnish
1. Position a rack in the upper third of the oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Oil a 12-cup standard muffin tin.
 2. Make the Spiced Pumpkin Puree: Combine all the ingredients in a medium skillet. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring frequently with a heatproof spatula, until the mixture comes to a low boil. Lower the heat and simmer 4 to 5 minutes, until the purée is dark and shiny, slightly thickened, and the sugar has dissolved.
 3. Remove from the heat and spoon into a shallow dish to cool. Refrigerate for up to 3 days or freeze up to 1 month. Use at room temperature.
 4. Make the batter: In a small bowl, mix the plant milk of your choice with 2 teaspoons of the apple cider vinegar. Set aside for 10 minutes to clabber.
 5. Place a wire mesh strainer over a medium bowl. Add the pastry flour, all-purpose flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger and

nutmeg to the strainer. Stir with a whisk to sift the ingredients into the bowl. Whisk to aerate the ingredients.

6. Mix the Spice Pumpkin Purée, oil, maple syrup, vanilla extract, and the remaining 2 teaspoons of apple cider vinegar in medium bowl. Add the clabbered milk and whisk until thoroughly blended. Pour into dry mixture and stir with a spatula only until the batter is smooth and no traces of flour remain. Stir the cranberries and chopped pecans into the batter.
7. Divide the batter evenly, filling each cup about 3/4 full. An ice cream scoop makes filling the cups easy, but spoons are fine.
8. Bake for 13 to 15 minutes, or until muffins are golden and a tester inserted into the middle of a muffin comes out clean or with just a few moist crumbs.
9. Cool the tin on a rack for 5 minutes. Carefully run a thin knife between the muffins and the inside of the cup and lift each muffin onto the rack to cool completely.
10. Store at room temperature in a tightly closed tin for a day or freeze for up to 1 month. Defrost uncovered.
11. Garnish: You might like to brush the muffins with some additional maple syrup for shine and flavor and sprinkle each one with a few toasted and

cooled pumpkin seeds.

